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M. N. ROY

(The Man Who Looked Ahead)

Volume I

BY
A. K. Hindi

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Publishers' Note

We take pleasure in placing before the public the first volume on the life of the world famous revolutionary Com. M. N. Roy on the eve of the Haripura session of the Indian National Congress. Owing to unavoidable circumstances and the urgency of the situation we have not been able to finish up the whole book in the press. We promise to bring out the second volume shortly. Considering the great part played by Com. M. N. Roy in the revolutionary movements in three continents even the portion published cannot be considered exhaustive enough.

We also request the readers to excuse us for some mistakes in printing.

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Modern Publishing
House.

Volume I

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- 15 Some of his recent writings.
- 16 His recent activities.
- 17 The future.

Please refer to 'Independent India' for the exact date of the publication of the second volume.

Will be shortly out:-

- 1 My Experiences in China
- 2 Indian Renaissance
- 3 Philosophy of Fascism

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And

Hindi Translation

Of

Com. Roy's

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Comrade
M. N. Roy.

M. N. Roy

The Man Who Looked Ahead

CHAPTER I.

The Beginning of Revolutionary Thought.

Subjugation of India by England was brought about at a time when a severe crisis had overtaken Indian people in the 18th Century. The old feudal order had become decadent just as in contemporay Europe. Nevertheless the germs of the new order had only grown insufficiently yet too weak and immature to overthrow the tottering old. The great Empire of the Moghuls collapsed submerging the country into a welter of internecine civil war which continued for decades. These had reduced the Indian body-politic to ruins. The economic life of the country had reached a choking point. The decadent old order of society had crashed nearly burying in its debris, even the weak and growing germs of the coming social order—that is—the capitalist order of society. Manufacturing industries had developed much earlier in India than in Europe. But these stagnated in the midst of the political and economic confusion of the 18th century.

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Meanwhile England fully equipped with the progressive mechanical means of production, armed with the precious metals secured from the New World and having acquired the wealth of India, by one means or the other took gigantic strides towards her making as the "Workshop of the World". India was left backward, while England became the exporter of commodities manufactured by her industries from the raw materials obtained from India. The balance had altogether changed.

Thus finally England accomplished her economic conquest of India most needed for the prosperity of England. Now she was on the eve of establishing her political supremacy. She had created all the necessary conditions for it. A sudden realisation of this fact overtook the representatives of old feudal order which was in the process of its decay, and on the road to political and economic bankruptcy.

A rebellion popularly known as the "Mutiny" of 1857 was the result. But it was too late. The old order had already outgrown its role in the social evolution of the Indian society. It was on the one hand exhausted by perpetual civil war, thus exhausting the Indian masses. On the other hand, England by now was fully prepared for such an eventuality. The people of India as such stood away from the scene of the revolt which was ruthlessly suppressed by England, by means of unheard of violence in the history of the world. Thus the final touch was given to the "Indian Empire" of England in the East.

The Beginning of Revolutionary Thought. 5

As an expression of the assumption of supreme power in India a new Royal title of Empress of India, Kaisar-i-Hind was devised for Queen Victoria. Lord Lytton as Viceroy arranged a stately Durbar in January 1877 at which he announced to the princes assembled, the assumption of this new Royal title. The Indian people had hardly dreamt of her 'Imperial' existence apart from being a Queen of a distant and alien land.

Any way the government of India was transferred to the Crown. England, as a result of the rebellion of 1857 challenging her supremacy over India, did not fail to learn the great historic lesson. She could not keep India under her domination fruitfully, unless she had the proper medium between her and the Indian masses. She found readily this in the person of the Indian-middlemen. The cardinal policy of England in India has been ever since then, to keep her industrially backward, so that she becomes a profitable market for the commodities manufactured by her industries, and lucrative base of raw materials required for their upkeep.

Normal economic development of India was not so much obstructed by subjective factors, like the fiscal measures etc., as by the contradiction inherent in the very system of imperialist exploitation. The influx of capital from the metropolis quickened trade which was carried on through the native-middlemen. Imperialism would not grudge them a part of the proceeds of the exploitation of the Indian masses.

* Queen Victoria's proclamation had announced that

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Indians without "any distinction of creed or religion" would be eligible for services afforded into the administrative departments of the British Indian government. But really speaking England could not carry through the successful administration of Indian government, without the help and assistance of Indians themselves. In this sphere too she badly needed the Indian middlemen sufficiently well up for the jobs of such offices.

Thereupon educational institutions were established in various parts of the country under the patronage of the British Indian rulers. The work of producing the 'merited' Indian middlemen began. But as far as the masses were concerned, the policy of our rulers was, as has been even now, to keep them in mental darkness.

This was the picture of India in the beginning of the closing decade of the nineteenth century when Manabendra Nath Roy was born in a small village in Bengal. Babu Subhas Chandra Bose, the well-known Indian Nationalist and Congress leader and a close friend of Roy also comes from the same village. Roy's original name is Narendra Nath Bhattacharji. His father, a respectable Bengali Brahmin, was a school teacher with a small income. The family lived in penury: it knew no luxury and no extravagance. There were no nurses to look after the little child and no silver spoon to feed him with. Like the teeming millions of India, he grew up into his boyhood only to find himself in a world of chaos and confusion, misery and unhappiness.

The Beginning of Revolutionary Thought. 7

His early education was looked after by his aged father. Later on he managed to go Calcutta for higher studies.

As a school boy M. N. Roy was an ardent admirer of the well-known revolutionary—Vinayak Savarkar ‘whose brave and courageous actions were a matter of great inspiration to him and which later on led him to actively participate in the revolutionary movements of the various countries of the world.’

The educational institutions established by the British rulers, on account of the very inherent contradiction into the system of imperialist economy, became the nurseries for revolutionary thoughts, which largely affected the political aspirations of the Indian youths. They began to learn from the historic experiences of the peoples of the world who had struggled to overthrow imperialist domination and had secured their liberty. Vinayak Savarkar—the inspirer of Roy, Barin Kumar Gosh and his brother Arbindo and many leaders of public thought, and national struggle were nourished into the very institutions organised for the successful exploitation of India.

Roy too was a student of one of these educational institutions, and it was there that he came in touch organically with those who were already initiated into the revolutionary secret societies. Young Roy was gradually drawn into the movement in which he was to play an important role.

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One of his colleagues of those days of the revolutionary movement in Bengal describes as follows, Roy's entry into the fold of the revolutionary organisation:—
“Narendra almost a boy, hardly fourteen, and yet verile and energetic, full of revolutionary enthusiasm, rushed into a little room in which we were holding an informal talk on the problems then facing us in Bengal and elsewhere. He had a talk with us. After this, he offered himself as a whole timer for the cause of liberty of India from the foreign yoke. He declared on oath that he would be prepared to do the impossible; for, there was nothing impossible for a revolutionary. Soon after, he joined us; he proved to be of very great value to our movement and possessed rare qualities found only in a great leader of men.”

The roots of this movement lay deep into the mass economic discontent then prevailing among the masses of the people and the pauperized middle classes. This was a result of continuous drain of India's material resources and exploitation of her labour and progressive pauperization of the peasantry by foreign imperialism. Ever since the conquest of India by England, the people of this country have been in the process of physical degeneration and mental degradation.

CHAPTER II.

The Anti-Partition Agitation of Bengal.

“ The population had greatly increased, business and trade had extended; administration had become more complex; the educated classes had taken to politics. On the other hand the Government had weakened. ”

This was the pet and plausible defence offered by the British Indian Government, in justification of the reactionary measures taken against the wishes of the people, under the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon. He began his notorious career by curtailing the already meager rights of the people. By a stroke of pen and might, the powers of the Calcutta Corporation were reduced to the minimum. This was immediately followed by a University Act, enacted as a result of the “ findings ” of a commission appointed by the Government. This Act brought the Senate under the official control and education became expensive; thus depriving the possibility for the growing generation to shake off the mental darkness.

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In order to prevent the official secrets from leaking out, he enacted another Act known as the "Official Secrets Act." As a result of another Commission appointed, Indians were declared unfit for the Special Police service. Not content with these measures, Curzon announced the partitioning of Bengal into two provinces in the month of July 1905 and in the following October, the scheme of partition of Bengal was enforced.

Moreover the Viceroy had declared that "Indians by their very environment and heritage and up-bringing were unfit for high administrative offices under the British rule." And on another occasion the proud representative of the British Crown declared, while addressing the merchants that "administration and exploitation go hand in hand."

All these measures and pronouncements were carried out with the sole purpose of preventing the awakening of the people. Curzon earnestly desired to suppress the aspiration of the Indian people for freedom. But this only helped the quickening of the national awakening of the subjugated. Of course, the masses of the people then did not come within the orbit of the struggle. Never-the-less in the very embryo of the revolutionary movement in India lay concealed factors of a mighty revolutionary movement embracing the democratic masses.

The partition of Bengal divided the Bengali speaking people into two provinces. The Bengalis were strongly opposed to this division. A gigantic movement in opposition to it was organised. It began to spread

The Anti-Partition Agitation of Bengal. 11

throughout the length and breadth of the province. On the other hand Government intensified its policy of repression. Processions and demonstrations organised by the leaders of the agitation—Roy being one of the active participants—were at once prohibited. This action on the part of the government only intensified the movement. There were Hartals throughout the province.

Students were forbidden from taking part in politics. Those who insisted on continuing their activities were rusticated and punished along with others. Roy too did not escape. He was arrested in connection with a revolutionary political dacoity alleged to have been committed by him along with other revolutionaries in his own village. The movement, however, could not be so easily suppressed. Sir B. Fuller, Lt-Governor of East Bengal actually declared that "Bloodshed may be necessary" and in order to back up his declaration Gurkha troops were requisitioned.

The Congress which was held in Benares in the same year protested against the partition of Bengal and the repressive policy of the government.

Students who were forbidden from participating in the agitation boycotted the British Indian educational institutions; and as a result, a Society for the promotion of National Education in Bengal was organised. It was known by the name of "Banga Jateeya Parishad." Roy was one of the active workers of this movement of which Bepin Chandra Pal was an exponent.

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Swadeshi, boycott, and national education became the programme of the movement. By its very nature, the scope of the movement was limited. The masses of the people who were being crushed under the new burden of imperialist exploitation were not within its orbit. But out of this very movement, the germs of a national revolutionary struggle were to grow. It spread throughout India and organisations with the above programme sprang up in the Punjab, Maharashtra, Andhra, and the United Provinces.

Uptill then not a shot was fired and not a bomb exploded. The movement however took a sudden turn. The organisers were not cowed down by the policy of repression on the part of the Government. On 30th April 1908 two bombs were thrown on two ladies—Kennedeyes—which were meant for Mr. Kingsford, the then District Judge of Muzzafferpore. Khudiram Bose hardly aged 18 was charged with the offence, convicted and executed. Since then the cult of violence was freely advocated. The columns of the “Yugantar” originally started by Barindra Kumar Ghosh were full of extreme radical revolutionary views. In one of its issues it declared as follows:—

“If the whole nation is inspired to throw off its yoke and become independent, then in the eye of God and the eye of Justice whose claim is more reasonable, the Indians' or the Englishmen's? The Indian has come to see that independence is the panacea for all evils. He will therefore even swim in a sea of blood to reach his goal. The British domination over India is a gross myth.”

The Anti-Partition Agitation of Bengal. 13

It is because the Indian holds this myth in his bosom that his sufferings are so great to-day. Long ago the Indian Rishis (inspired sages) preached the destruction of falsehood and the triumph of truth. And this foreign rule based on injustice is a gross falsehood. It must be subverted and true Swadeshi (Indian) rule established. May truth be victorious."

The agitation against the partition of Bengal, a peaceful movement, later on, developed into a revolutionary national movement. The above quotation from the most powerful organ of the movement represents the temper of the people. In course of time it began to forge ahead and liberty from foreign yoke became its ideal. The "Yugantar" had nearly reached its circulation to 56,666. But it ceased to appear in 1908 in consequence of the newly passed Newspapers (Incitement to offences) Act. Likewise other papers too stopped publication. Press prosecutions were to be witnessed everywhere in the province.

Nevertheless the suppression of the legal press did not suppress " sedition " because any punishment awarded to youngmen entirely ceased to scare them away. They preached it throughout the length and breadth of the province and whenever prosecuted, they would take the necessary legal aid to get themselves acquitted or discharged. Roy was for a number of time prosecuted for "sedition", at times he was acquitted, and at times he was punished.

However sedition went underground and the bomb

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and the revolver took its place, because measures such as "Seditious Meeting Act" the "Press Act" (1908) and the "Criminal Law Amendment Act" (1910) were passed inspite of a strong popular opposition. This led to sporadic "terroristic" acts of a political nature, which took place from time to time. Roy was arrested along with many other revolutionaries in connection with the Howrah conspiracy case and was charged with "waging war" against the king and with committing dacoities in the districts round about Calcutta in order to collect money for furtherance of their scheme. Roy along with many other revolutionaries with the exception of six was acquitted in April 1911.

As a result of the new turn the movement had taken, Lord Morley repudiated the policy of Curzon. But even this would not lead to peace. The demand of the rank and file of the movement was annulment of the partition of Bengal. It was a matter of prestige of the mighty British Indian government and therefore Lord Minto declared that the government would not yield—"either in response to agitation from below or in obedience to authority from above" but out of its own free will end on its own initiative. Finally on the day of the King's coronation ceremony in India on 13 Dec. 1911 the partition of Bengal was annulled and the metropolis of India was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi.

CHAPTER III.

Aftermath of Anti-Partition Agitation.

The annulment of the partition of Bengal did not bring peace and freedom to the people. All the repressive laws passed during the course of the agitation against Bengal Partition yet remained in force. The people were deprived of their most elementary democratic rights. There was no freedom of press, speech and association. Large number of young men were rotting behind the prison bars. Lokmanya Tilak was confined in the fort of Mandlay; he was ailing all alone without even a companion.

This was exactly the situation in 1911. But there was a bit of lull in the political atmosphere in 1912. Nevertheless it was marked by one of the most known terrorist revolutionary actions. A bomb was thrown on Lord Hardinge the then Viceroy of India, while he was riding an elephant in the procession organised on entering Delhi—the new capital. After this incident, the

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press began to be more rigidly controlled. It again led to a movement for the immediate repeal of the Press Act. The unrest thus continued.

Roy's active participation in the anti—partition agitation, his having been arrested a number of times in its connection and his arrest on suspicion in connection with the Howrah conspiracy and dacoity cases and his suspected connection with the secret revolutionary organisations and with noted revolutionaries brought him into bad books of the "Law and Order". His movements were very carefully watched and wherever he went he was shadowed by the plain-clothed men of the special branch.

Several dacoities were alleged to have been committed by noted revolutionaries in various parts of Bengal. Roy was arrested in connection with the well-known Garden Reach Dacoity. It was the most sensational event which, it was alleged, brought several thousands to the revolutionaries.

While he was being detained by the police and kept into the police lock-up, the authorities were carrying on investigation to secure evidence to get him convicted; but the police failed to get any evidence whatsoever against him. Later on, he was acquitted by the court; for, no evidence worth its name could be produced by them.

This acquittal did not bring him peace. He was always harassed by the police and bothered by informants. A train of them would follow him even on his

journey. Once he paid a visit to the holy city of Benares. He thought there would be none to bother him; he would be left alone without harassment. But to his surprise he found that his shadowers were there. Even when in Calcutta if any thing of a revolutionary nature would take place, Roy would be the first citizen to be taken to the police head-quarters; some times detained for days, questioned about his movements and then allowed to go.

It is said once he was closeted with one of his friends in his little room in Calcutta. There lay an automatic revolver on the table in the way usual with the police officials. He suspected some one from the Special Branch. He immediately picked up a copy of an English Calcutta daily which was lying near by and covered up the weapon with it. He gracefully opened the door and found none else but Charles Togart the then Commissioner of Police. He cordially requested the police official to come in and gave him a chair to sit. Roy with his companion simply stood near the table keeping his hand all the time on the newspaper which concealed the revolver. He was answering coolly the questions put to him about his movements. It was nearly half an hour he was standing without betraying his feelings. The august Commissioner Mr. Charles Togart (now Sir) left him fully satisfied or dissatisfied with the answers given by Roy. He banged the door on him fully relieved of the ugly situation.

By this time Roy had acquired an outstanding position in the national revolutionary movement. He was one of the central figures in the Anusilan Samiti, a Central Organisation of the Bengal revolutionaries, which had hundreds of branches throughout the province.

CHAPTER IV

The Projected Armed Revolution.

The immense value and utility of the colonies was realised fully in the closing decades of the 19th century. England's monopoly of the world market was contested by the rise of other industrial nations. These had completed the period in which their industrial development could take place mainly on the basis of the home market. Finally they appeared on the world market as competitors of Britain. Germany was one of them. A new era of colonial expansion had begun. Modern imperialism became the feature of the world politics. The struggle for the partition of the economically backward regions of the earth into monopoly market for the various industrial states finally led to the imperialist war between the allies of England and Germany.

The war broke out in July 1914, and by November, the German Imperial army was near the doors of France. The British Indian Government hurriedly packed off the Indian army to the Flanders to protect England and her allies.

Taking advantage of the situation created by the world war the Indian National Congress, at its session held in the same year demanded "self-government" for India. While, the revolutionaries set themselves to the task of organising an armed up-rising against the British Indian Government. They thought that as Britain was involved in war, the Indian army apparently meant to "protect India from outside aggression" and internal trouble would be sent out of India; and hence the Government would be left with very inadequate means to suppress the up-rising. They felt that they could successfully overthrow the foreign domination with the help of the Germans-the enemies of Britain.

Early in 1915 certain of the Bengal revolutionaries met and decided to organise and put the whole scheme of raising a rebellion in India with the help of the Germans upon a proper footing establishing cooperation between revolutionaries in Siam and other places with Bengal and getting into touch with the Germans and that funds should be raised by dacoities.

Thereupon the **Garden Reach** and **Belliaghat** dacoities were committed on 12th January and 22nd February which brought in Rs. 40,000. Bholanath Chatterjee had already been sent to Bangkok to get in touch with conspirators there. Jatindra Nath Lahiri who arrived in Bombay from Europe early in March brought to the Bengal revolutionaries offers of German help and invited them to send an agent to Batavia to cooperate. A meeting was thereupon held as a result of which **Narendra Nath Bhattacharji** was sent to Batavia

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to discuss plans with the Germans there. He started in April and adopted the pseudonym of **C. Martin**. In the same month another Bengali Abani Mukherji was sent by the conspirators to Japan, while the leader Jatin Mukherji went into hiding at Balasore owing to police investigations in connection with the Garden Reach and Belliaghata incidents. In the same month S. S. Maverick of which more will be told started on a voyage from San Pedro in California.

On his arrival at Batavia "Martin" was introduced by the German Consul to Theodor Helfferich who stated that a cargo of arms and ammunitions was on its way to Karachi, to assist the Indians in a revolution. "Martin" then urged that the ship should be diverted to Bengal. This was eventually agreed to after reference to the German Consul-General in Shanghai. **"Martin" then returned to make arrangements to receive the cargo of S. S. Maverick as the ship was called at Rai Mangal in the Sunderbans. The cargo was said to consist 30,000 rifles with 400 rounds of ammunition each and 2 lakhs of rupees. Meanwhile "Martin" had telegraphed to Harry and Sons in Calcutta, a bogus firm kept by a well-known revolutionary, that "business was helpful." In a series of remittances from Helfferich in Batavia to Harry and Sons in Calcutta between June and August which aggregated Rs. 43,000 of which the revolutionaries received Rs. 33,000 before the authorities discovered what was going on.**

"Martin" returned to India in the middle of June, and the conspirators Jatin Mukherji, Jadu Gopal Mukh-

erji, **Narendra Bhattacharji** (Martin), Bholanath Chatterji and Atal Ghosh set about making plans to receive the Maverick's Cargo and employ it to the best advantage. They decided to divide the arms into three parts to be sent respectively to: 1. Hatis for the Eastern Bengal districts to be worked by the members of the Barisal party. 2. Calcutta. 3. Bilasore.

They considered that they were numerically strong enough to deal with the troops in Bengal, but they feared reinforcement from outside. With this idea in view they decided to hold up the three railways into Bengal by blowing up the principle bridges. Jatindra was to deal with the Madras railway from Bilasore, Bholanath Chatterji was sent to Onakradharpur to take charge of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, while Satish Chakrabarti was to go to Hatis, where a force was to collect, first to obtain control of the Eastern Bengal districts, and then to march on to Calcutta. **The Calcutta party under Narendra Bhattacharji and Bepin Ganguly** was first to take Fort William and afterwards to sack the town of Calcutta. The German officers arriving in the Maverick were to stay in Eastern Bengal and raise and train armies

In the meantime, the work of taking delivery of the cargo of the Maverick was apparently arranged by , **Jadu Gopal Mukherji** who is said to have placed himself in communication with a Zamindar in the vicinity of Rai Mangal, who had promised to provide men, lighters etc; for the unloading of the vessel. The Maverick would arrive at night and would be recognised by a

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series of lamps hung horizontally. It was hoped that the first distribution of arms would take place by the 1st of July 1915.

While the conspirators were waiting for the Maverick, a Bengali arrived from Bangkok on 3rd July with a message from Atmaram, a Punjabi conspirator there, that the German Consul in Siam was sending by boat a consignment of 5000 rifles and ammunition and one lakh of rupees to Rai Mangal. The conspirators thinking this was in substitution of the Maverick cargo induced the Bengali messenger to return to Bangkok via Batavia and inform Helfferich not to change plan and the other consignments of arms might be landed at Hatia (Sandwip) and Balasore in the Bay of Bengal or Gokarni on the West coast of India-South of Karwar. In July Government learnt of the projected landing of arms at Rai Mangal and took precaution.

On the seventh of August the police on information received, searched the premises of Harry and Sons and effected some arrests.

On the 13th August one of the conspirators sent from Bombay a warning telegram to Helfferich in Java and on the 15th August Narendra Nath Bhattacharji (Martin) and another started for Batavia to discuss matters with Helfferich.

On the 4th of September the Universal Emporium at Balasore a branch of Harry and Sons was searched and also a revolutionary retreat at Kapatopada 20 miles distant, where a map of the Sunderbans was found with a cutting from a Penang paper about the Maverick.

Eventually a gang of five Bengalis was "rounded up" and in the fight which ensued Jatin Mukherji, the leader and Chittapriya Ray Chaudhari.....were killed.

During this year nothing more was heard from "Martin" by the conspirators and eventually two of them went to Goa to try and telegraph to Batavia. On 27 December 1915 the following telegram was sent to "Martin" at Batavia from Goa:—"How doing—no news: very anxious. B. Chatterton". This led to inquiries in Goa and two Bengalis were found, one of whom proved to be Bholanath Chatterji. He committed suicide in Poona Jail on 27th January 1916.

We will now shortly narrate the story of the Maverick, another vessel the Henry S; both of which started from America for Eastern waters in connection with the German plot, and describe certain other scheme entertained by the Germans.

The S. S. Maverick was an oil steamer of the Standard Oil company, which had been purchased by a German firm, F. Jebsen & Co. of San Francisco. She sailed about the 22nd of April 1915 from San Pedro in California with cargo. She had a crew of 25 officers and men and five so called Persian, who signed on as waiters. They were all Indians and had been shipped by Von Bric'ken of the German Consulate at San Francisco and Ramchandra, the successor of Hardayal of the Gadhr. One of them, Hari Singh, a Punjabi had quantities of Gadhr literature in trunks. The Maverick went to San Jose del Cabo in lower California and obtained clearance for Anjer in Java. They then sailed for the

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Island of Socorro, 600 miles West of Mexico, to meet a schooner called the Annie Larsen which had a cargo of arms and ammunition purchased by a German in New York named Tauscher and shipped at San Francisco on the Annie Larsen. The master of the Maverick had been instructed to stow the rifles in one of the empty oil tanks and flood them with oil and stow ammunition in another tank, and in case of urgent necessity to sink the ship. The Annie Larsen never effected a meeting with Maverick and after some weeks the Maverick sailed for Java via Honolulu. In Java she was searched by the Dutch authorities and found to be empty. The Annie Larsen eventually about the end of June 1915 arrived at Hoquiam in Washington territory where her cargo was seized by the United States authorities. It was claimed by Count Bernsdorf, the German ambassador at Washington as belonging to Germany, but the claim was disallowed by the American Government.

Helfferrich took care of the crew of the Maverick in Batavia and eventually sent them back in her to America, "Martin" being substituted for Hari Singh. Thus "Martin" escaped.

Another vessel which started in pursuance of a German-Indian plot was Henry S. a schooner with auxiliary crew. She cleared from Manila for Shanghai with a cargo of arms and ammunition which were discovered by the customs authorities who made the master to unload them before sailing. Her destination was then changed to Pontiank. Eventually her motor broke down

and she put into a port in the Celebes. She had on board two German Americans, Whede and Boehm. The general intention seems to have been that she should go to Bangkok and land some of her arms which were to be concealed in a tunnel at Pakoh, on the Siam-Burma frontier while Boehm trained Indians on the frontier for the invasion of Burma. Boehm was arrested in Singapore on his way from Batavia which he had reached from the Celebes. He had joined the Henry S. at Manila under instructions received from H. Gupta in Chicago and was instructed by the German Consul at Manila to see that 500 revolvers were landed at Bangkok and the rest of the consignment of 5000 sent on to Chittagong. The arms were said to be revolvers with rifles stock; probably therefore they were Mauser pistols.

There is reason to believe that when the scheme connected with the Maverick failed the German Consul General at Shanghai arranged to send two other ships with arms to the Bay of Bengal, one to Rai Mangal and the other to Balasore. The first was to carry 20,000 rifles, 8,000,000 cartridges, 2,000 pistols and hand grenades and explosives. "Martin" however pointed out to the German Consul at Batavia that Rai Mangal was no longer a safe landing place and suggested Hatia was better. The proposed change of place was discussed with Helferrich and eventually the following plan was evolved.

The steamer for Hatia was to come direct from Shanghai and arrive about the end of December. The ship for Balasore was to be a German steamer lying in a Dutch port and

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was to pick up cargo at sea. A third steamer also a war bound German vessel, was to sail to the Andamans shipping a cargo of arms at sea and raid Port Blair, pick up anarchist convicts and men of mutinous Singapore regiment who it was thought, were interned there, and then proceed to Rangoon and raid it. To assist the conspirators in Bengal a Chinaman was sent by Helfferich with 66000 Guilders and a letter to be delivered to a Bengali at Penang or to one of the two addresses in Calcutta: he never delivered his message for he was arrested at Singapore with the money on his person.

At the same time the Bengali who had accompanied "Martin" to Batavia was sent to Shanghai to confer with the German Consul General there and return in the ship destined for Hatia. He reached Shanghai with some difficulty and was arrested.*

It seems, that the main causes that led to a lull in the revolutionary movement in Bengal, were the unfortunate death of Jatin, the arrest of several of his colleagues in various parts of the world and India, their having been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and death, spying in the camp of the revolutionaries, the arrest of the Chinaman, and the seizure by the police of the note book of Abani Mukherji one of the revolutionaries sent to Japan. Moreover the discontented masses were in a state of disorganisation, the movement had no programme that would help the mobilisation of the masses for the effective overthrow of

* Vide, Sedition Committee Report, 1918.

foreign domination. The essential conditions for the popular triumph did not exist. However it became clear to the leaders of the movement, that no country could be easily freed and a movement which was based on the support of the discontented youths of the middle classes, and a section of the army without anything to do whatsoever with the masses of the people could not but end into a blind alley.

The great and historic lesson of this struggle and its premature state was not lost on the representatives of the movement. Manabendra Nath Roy was the first among his fellow fighters to realise the futility of such a conspiratorial way of organisation of the struggle against the foreign rule. He, as we shall presently see, realised also that those who were the most oppressed and exploited were the Indian masses. The middle classes stood on the verge of pauperisation. An alliance of all the classes exploited by imperialism is the only way to freedom. Roy as early as 1916 heralded that such an alliance could only be found in the common programme based on the revolutionary strivings of these classes. The way to the progress and prosperity of the Indian people lies in the development of their political consciousness and organisation; for, without it no country can come out triumphant against the oppressors. Nonetheless the valuable experience gained during these days of trial of strength between the oppressed and the oppressor contributed to mature thinking much necessary to guide the movement in future towards its successful culmination.

CHAPTER V.

An Astounding Escape.

As required by the exigencies of the situation Roy had to leave India for some unknown destination. Accompanied by one of his comrades he started from India by a steamer that laid anchor at one of the Southern ports. The authorities were on the look-out. They wanted to prevent his getting away. The Police at all the ports were informed about some suspicious out-going passengers. All the steamers for the Far-East were being thoroughly searched. At one of the ports the steamer by which Roy was escaping, stopped to receive cargo. Roy and his companion were busy looking through the maps of the various parts of the world. They were studying their plan to reach successfully their destination. There was at that moment a knock at the door of the cabin occupied by these two young Indians. Roy was on his guard. Without any loss of time and with presence of mind, he shuffled off these maps into the back side of his bunk.

He opened the door of the cabin and none to his surprise, he found a police official heading a posse of armed police. The officer, a Mohamedan gentleman was the Superintendent of the local police force. With composure Roy received the officer and asked him politely what they could do for him.

Their innocent demeanour left no room for suspicion. The officer went on talking garrulously; "Sons of respectable families from Bengal", he said, "were engaged in doing acts of violence and carrying on dacoities; some of them were wanted in that connection. They might be escaping from India to evade prosecution. I was just looking for them and if I found I would surely catch them."

The attention of the Superintendent was attracted to Tolstoy's "Religion" which was lying on the bunk. He picked it up, began turning its pages and soon entered into a passionate discourse on religion. He was emphatic that Islam was the best of all religions. Roy evidently agreed with his views. The officer was indeed very much pleased to hear such a eulogy of Islam from a young Hindu.

But his religious vein was soon over. The officer grew conscious of his duty. He enquired of them about their destination and the purpose for which they were leaving India. Roy had to hide his light under a bushel. He quietly explained that they had completed their course of education in India, and were therefore proceeding abroad for higher studies. They very much wanted to

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go to England, but then, they could not do so on account of War. They were going, therefore, to Japan.

A little silence followed. The officer mused awhile. Then suddenly he started.

"I am just on the look-out for those youngmen."

Roy laughed.

"Oh! How do you know we are not the same men whom you are out to catch?", in good humour he exclaimed.

The officer shrugged his head.

"Oh, no, I know my job too well," laying stress on every word, he continued, "I am a man of wide experience, you know, I can at once make out who is who. I can read a meaning into the faces. You can never be the wanted men. You look so innocent, don't you?"

"Yes, you are eagle-eyed," Roy complemented him.

The fateful hour was over.

"I am sorry; I disturbed you," the officer apologetically said. "Nevertheless I am much pleased to have a talk with you. Bon Voyage!"

Out went the officer from the cabin with his armed police. The catch wonderfully escaped.

And so Roy with his friend mysteriously left the Indian shore to an unknown destination in the Far-East for the fulfilment of a revolutionary mission.

CHAPTER VI.

In The Far East.

During the period Roy was abroad as the representative of the Indian Revolutionary movement he visited Japan, China, Java, Sumatra, the Dutch East Indies, Jamaica and the Phillipines. In these countries Roy established organic contact with the representative organisations engaged in the struggle for freedom from native and imperialist exploitation. He had the cause of the colonial countries at heart. With amazing capacity, never relaxed, he toured the various countries, held discussions with eminent revolutionists and critically studied the various aspects of their movements. He did not waste time in revolutionary romance but was engaged in finding out the solution of the common problem of the colonial people. He found in their struggle a great similarity with that of the Indian people for freedom from foreign domination. The peoples of the colonial countries were either under same or nationally different imperialist exploitation. The freedom of the colonial countries was to him a single united question.

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In his efforts to help the development of the movements of these countries he was closely associated with the outstanding personalities of the revolutionary national movement. It was during his sojourn in China, that he met the late Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the famous leader of the Chinese people's movement against foreign imperialism. Roy stayed with him for some time and had searching discussions on vital questions affecting the progress of the peoples of China and India. He was soon friends with him. Dr. Sun had high admiration for Roy and it is note-worthy that he readily succoured him in times of difficulty.

At one time while in China Roy was arrested and kept a prisoner, but with the aid of the Chinese nationalist revolutionaries—the followers of Dr. Sun he could secure his freedom.

CHAPTER VII

In The United States of America

On his arrival from Batavia in the United States of America Roy put himself in touch with the Consul-General of Germany. In an interview with this German representative he had the most vital and thought-provoking conversation, which exposed in true light the sordid aims of Imperialist Germany.

As a result of previous discussion the German Consul-General had agreed to help an armed up-rising against the British in India; for, Germany at that fateful moment wanted anyhow to keep the enemy busy on all fronts and especially in India which had been for the Allies a source of great assistance in the war. It was also significant that Germany would possibly secure a good market for her commodities in the event of overthrow of British rule in India. The Consul-General however wished to strike a bargain. He said to Roy, "Where do we stand if the present

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British rulers of India are driven out of your country with our help and resources? Is Germany assured of substantial privileges in your country, in return, if she assists you in carrying out the projected armed revolution?"

This set Roy thinking. The mask of virtue was off. The diabolical aim of Germany could be seen through. It hurt Roy's sense of revolutionary convictions. He said;

"So, if we are to receive help from Germany we have under the bargain to sell our country to you. Your proposal only amounts to a substitution of one master for another. It is simply shameful. We can never agree to that. Not only do we reject it, but we shall be **up-in-arms against any body showing readiness to sell our mother-land** to foreign exploiters. We thought, Germany would help us against a common enemy. But it had proved to be a myth. Indians shall no more be slaves to any foreign power. The Germans are no exception." "To-day," Roy continued, "I, for one, am fully convinced that the Indian people shall have to organise themselves, and shall have to depend solely on their strength and revolutionary ability to fight for liberty from foreign yoke."

Roy served him right. He did not want to wait any more. He picked up his hat and straight away made for the door. But the German Consul stopped him and said; "I have met Indians, but they do not seem to disagree with my point of view. You seem to be an exception." Roy replied, "It may be so, but perhaps in their

enthusiasm to wipe out British rule they lose sight of the sinister implication of your proposal. Otherwise, they are equally as patriotic as myself."

This was one of the outstanding reasons which eventually led to the abandonment of the scheme to organise a revolution in India with the help of the Germans. To Roy it was as clear as day light that the Germans and the English and their allies were involved in the world war—neither to end it—as they professed nor to defend democracy. It was a war waged by the rival imperialist powers for partitioning the backward regions of the world, and securing the control over the world market. It is a historic fact that the German imperialism exploited the peoples of the "German Colonies" such as the "German East Africa" in just the same manner as the British did in the case of India and other countries. All imperialists are alike and run a race among themselves for establishing their domination over industrially backward countries of the world.

These crucial facts were sufficient for Roy. He realised that the fact of British imperialism being engaged in a war was not sufficient for Indian revolutionaries to strike a blow at it, because there was lacking the most important basis for such a revolutionary overthrow of the British Regime in India. That was the absence of political consciousness on the part of the masses of the people. Were they conscious of their slavery and the necessity of the liberation from foreign domination, the help of a foreign country would not be needed. It is true, that the crisis brought about

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by a war could be fruitfully used by a subject people only when a well organised mass movement was there to sharpen the struggle between the ruled and the rulers. Supplies for the purposes of war—men and materials could be held up and thus a movement for national freedom could be developed to a higher form of struggle.

During these days, the late, Lala Lajpatrai, the well-known Punjab leader, was in America. He was deported by the Government of India on account of his political activities. For some time, he and Roy—the two eminent political exiles lived together discussing the future of the Indian revolutionary struggle that was yet to come.

Roy was too honest a revolutionary to lead a life of dissipation and idleness in America. He was not dejected at the abandonment of the romance of the armed revolution in India. He got in touch with various schools of political thoughts—including the Marxist, and established close connections with the foremost leaders of the working class and socialist movements. It was then that he came in touch with Jay Lovestone, who later on became a well-known Communist leader in the U. S. A.

He was anxious to benefit by their understanding and knowledge. He became a matter of attraction even for those who were held then as thinkers of that time; for he evinced great appreciation and rare insight into scientific and political problems. He showed tremendous urge to know things and learn from the revolu-

tionary experience of others. It was here that he undertook a thorough study of the various branches of natural and social sciences. Besides, he became in course of time an active propagandist of the socialist and Marxist doctrines and began to take active part in the working class movement.

He began to contribute to the local American Press articles on India from the stand point of the materialist conception of history. Soon Roy was a matter of talk amongst the revolutionaries, trade unionists, socialists, and members of the rank and file of the working class movement in the U. S. A. He was regarded as one of the leading Marxists of that time.

His activities based entirely on a new outlook in the realm of politics, were a matter of grave concern to the States' Government. He was arrested and taken into the custody by the American Police.

Next day, as required under the law, he was produced before a Magistrate. He submitted a bail application which he himself argued. He told the Court that he had no money nor any acquaintances. He could not give any sureties if the Court required them. He might be released on personal recognisance, so that he could make some arrangements for his defence. He was released accordingly and ordered to appear on the day fixed for trial.

Once again he was in his lodging. He began to ponder over the situation. He was apparently under a conflict: trial or escape ? He looked at the trial from

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the stand-point of the revolutionary cause for which he was striving. Would it strengthen? Or, would it cripple? He felt sceptic about the outcome of his trial. He took a bold decision. The cause elsewhere was calling him. The urge for action was intense. He decided to escape and set himself to making plans for exit from America into Mexico.

CHAPTER VIII

In The Midst of Mexican Revolution.

Roy arrived in Mexico.

The masses of the Mexican people were very much discontented with the prevailing political and economic state of affairs in the country. There was a huge national revolutionary movement, which had already begun in 1910. In course of time it took a more radical turn and eventually it came under the influence of Alvaro Obregon and Plutarco Elias Calles. Both were inhabitants of the Northern State of Sonora: the former was a planter and the latter a school-teacher. They were intellectual radicals right from their youth and as such they were ardent advocates of land reforms. In this they voiced the mass discontent prevailing among the native (Red) Indian population. Later on, they rose to the rank of the Generals of the armies mainly composed of the native troops, with whose support an armed uprising was organised which placed Madero in the Presidency in 1911 and Carranza in 1914.

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Obregon was then the most influential of the two leaders, as he was the recognised leader of the radical wing of the national revolutionary movement under the leadership of Carranza. Later on, he rose to the position of the Commander-in-chief of the Mexican national army.

On his arrival Roy put himself in touch with these two outstanding leaders of radical wing of the movement, and after a few days he decided to plunge headlong into the struggle of the Mexican masses for their freedom from exploitation by capitalists, big landowners and corrupt Government. To him the cause of any people of whatever country was his own: clime or nationality was no more a barrier to him. His organising ability, his political astuteness, his astounding energy, and his revolutionary genius brought him to the forefront of the struggle, and was soon recognised as one of its outstanding leaders.

In spite of the stubborn opposition of Carranza the movement took a sharp turn and a new constitution was framed in the year 1917 which embodied certain revolutionary provisions regarding the system of ownership in land and nationalization of all mineral and petroleum resources of the country.

It was in course of his revolutionary activities in this country that Roy met M. Borodin a noted Bolshevik leader from Russia. Ever since Roy's arrival he was watching sympathetically his activities with great interests. Later on having come in his close association, Borodin became a great friend of Roy.

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Roy was the chief organiser of the Communist party of Mexico and was its secretary. He guided the work of the party most ably which on the one hand helped the democratic national revolutionary movement to a very great extent, and on the other evoked admiration from M. Borodin himself. It was this Russian leader who wrote to Lenin that he had found in Mexico a remarkable Indian revolutionary who had a potentiality of a great leader. He further wrote to him that it would be worthwhile to invite him to Russia and thus create an organic contact with the movement in India.

Thereupon Lenin invited him to Russia, on behalf of the Bolshevik Party and the newly formed Soviet Government. Roy's proposed departure from Mexico came as a shock to the Mexicans who as a matter of fact did not want to part with him because he was regarded by them as one of their own countrymen.

To-day Roy is remembered with endearment and pride by the Mexican people as their hero who successfully led the revolution.

CHAPTER IX

Through Germany.

On the invitation of Lenin, Roy left Mexico for Russia. He arrived in Germany, en route, by the end of 1918. At that time Germany was overtaken by a severe economic crisis. The forces of social revolution had been stirred up; for, Germany and the world at large had been ruined by the war. The revolutionary tide was rising throughout the Continent. The success of the Russian revolution had greatly encouraged the proletarian masses.

It was in August 1918 that the British opened a great and successful thrust against the German army, and on the 8th of the same month the German lines "wilted and collapsed". This was a turning and deciding point in the war which finally brought a crushing defeat for Germany.

In spite of this collapse, the Germans attempted to bring out their Fleet for the last and final struggle, but the sailors had mutinied on 7th November 1918.

This was a practical expression of a rapidly spreading social unrest in Germany.

Seeing this situation, William, the proud and once mighty Emperor of Germany accompanied by his crown prince, unceremoniously fled away to Holland; for, not only the ambition for a world Empire remained unrealised, but the masses of the German people rose in a mighty revolutionary up-rising demanding the termination of war and his abdication.

Finally on 11th November 1918 an armistice was signed. The Kaiser had abdicated, the war had come to an "end"! But the revolution had begun. The war resulted into abject poverty and unbearable distress for the great majority of the German people. Millions of them were sacrificed at the altar of the greedy ambitions of the imperialist-capitalism, while it brought no relief whatsoever to the labouring masses.

It was the worker who was made a tool in the hands of the German capitalists, bankers and militarists. He was sentimentally persuaded by one trick or the other to go to the battle field, only to find his own comrades and fellow fighters in the common cause to be combatted! He had worked overtime for the rapid production of the war-requirements, gone without even one meal per day, suffered all the hardships, had to desert his family, starved and even staked his own life—all for the benefit that would be for the masters and the bosses!

These facts were not easy to forget. They came to them as the basis on which to fight their own battle for emancipation which would eventually lead them on

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the road to the establishment of the democratic freedom. Ever since October, 1918, the revolutionary workers of Berlin had been preparing for an up-rising and had set up a "shop-steward" movement which directly aimed at a socialist republic. For a lead in this direction, they looked to the leaders of the Sparta-Kuss-Bund.

Soon after his arrival in Berlin, Roy met the leaders of the Sparta-Kuss-Bund—which was founded by Karl-Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. This was a sort of a left-wing of the Social Democratic Party. Later on, it became the Communist party. He brought to the masses of the German workers the revolutionary greetings of the Mexican proletariat, wishing them speedy success in their struggle against militarism and capitalist exploitation.

Called upon by the exigencies of the situation, workers in various industries, commercial concerns and trades were getting ready for an emergency. The organised waiters in all the luxurious hotels of Berlin were to strike first. A day-before the strike, a waiter came to his room* and told him, "Comrade, to-morrow begins our struggle for the assertion of our right to extricate ourselves from this mad capitalist world, a struggle for freedom and democracy. Early morning there will be a gigantic strike of all the waiters working in all the hotels of the city. None will be there to serve the idle rich. There will be little for them to eat. You are our comrade in the common cause, you will not starve, you will suffer no inconvenience. I have brought provisions enough, that will keep you going for more than a month".

* Roy was, at this time, staying at a hotel on Potsdamer Platz (Berlin).

Next morning saw a general strike of all the waiters employed in all the city hotels. Luxury loving idlers were in a terrible mess. The heroic action of the waiters was followed by their fellow workers. Strikes spread in other industries and workshops. The exhausted returning soldiers were joining them. The situation was tense. It had become pregnant with great social changes.

Never-the-less the German industrialists who were mainly responsible for the world conflagration yet stuck to their position. They were required to be dislodged, should the masses of the German people indeed be free. Merely the flight of the Kaiser did not suffice, for by itself it was not going to relieve the masses of the German people of their miserable conditions. Precisely for this reason the entire working class was astir.

The Revolution was more than an anti-war upheaval. Capitalism was utterly defenceless. In this objectively revolutionary situation, the subjective factor—that is, a revolutionary political party representing the revolutionary strivings of the masses of the German people—most necessary for the success of the revolution—was absent. The Social Democratic party under Ebert and Scheidemann would not serve its purpose, nor would the Independent Social Democrats under Kautsky and Bernstein would help the situation. As a matter of fact they acted as so many safety-valves for the old order of society which was on the verge of a collapse.

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Finally, on 30th December 1918 the Spartacists split with the Independent Social Democrats and a nearest approach for the formation of the much needed revolutionary political party of the proletariat* was made at their conference which was held early in January 1919.

The Social Democrats (so called socialists) who formed the 'Revolutionary Government' were afraid to act. The crisis brought about by the dismissal of a left-wing Independent Eichorn, the Berlin Chief of Police changed the entire situation. Independents, Spartacists, and shop stewards formed a bloc and called upon the workers to come out into the streets. On 6th January a hundred thousand revolutionary workers filled the streets of Berlin. The Government† had fled and Chancellor's palace, the seat of the Government was open to the revolution.

In this situation there lacked organisation and leadership. Therefore the attempted insurrection failed and Gustav Noske—the Social Democratic Commisar for Defence having secured help from the German Junkers suppressed it. Karl Liebkneith and Rosa Luxemburg were arrested and while on the way to prison were murdered by the counter-revolutionaries.

The net result of the war, then, was the overthrow of autocratic monarchy and establishment of a republic.

* The Communist party is the only revolutionary party of the working class.

† 'The Revolutionary government' formed by Social Democrats.

lic on the principles laid down in the constitution drafted and adopted by the Weimar National Assembly. Of course it was a much better type of a capitalist democratic constitution than that of any other country. Never-the-less power did not pass over to the democratic masses of the German people—the proletariat.

It was during this revolutionary crisis that Roy came in close association with Heinrich Brandler, Dr. August Thalheimer, Thelmann, and many other communist leaders with whom he later on collaborated on many questions of international importance.

CHAPTER X.

In Soviet Russia

As a representative delegate of the Communist Party of Mexico and as a representative of the national revolutionary movement in India, Roy arrived in Moscow some time in the beginning of 1919. He was warmly received by Lenin and other Russian leaders. Lenin was a past-master in sizing up people. He held discussions with this tall and swarthy Indian. He could see in him a revolutionary of rare intellect and indomitable will, a great asset to the cause of revolutionary movement in India and the world.

Some of Roy's jealous compatriots had already come to know about his journey to Moscow. They were mostly on the Continent. They had heard delusory stories about the "Russian Gold." They thought, Roy was exploiting this precious metal in Moscow, while they were unfortunately left in the lurch. Thereupon they held a meeting in Berlin and elected delegates to be sent to Moscow to present their case before Lenin.

On their arrival in Moscow these delegates demanded an interview with Lenin. Of course, it was not so easy to have it during those days of crisis. They were the days of Russia's trial of strength against the efforts of the capitalist world to keep up the civil war in order to wreck the newly established Soviet Republic. Lenin asked them to see M. Bukharin, a prominent leader of the Russian revolution. But these Indian "revolutionaries" would not be satisfied by an interview with M. Bukharin. They wanted anyhow to meet Lenin who later on agreed to grant an interview.

They submitted two demands before Lenin for his consideration :—

1. About a million dollars for financing a weekly to be published from Berlin essentially to advocate the cause of Indian freedom.

2. Inquiry into the representative character of Roy.

Lenin knew the game. He was not surprized at the demands. He was quite sympathetic about any proposal that would help the advancement of the cause of Indian freedom. But he said, Russia had no millions. His country was passing through the most difficult time in history. Nevertheless he said the cause of Indian freedom was his and he could by all means help them in their struggle for emancipation. He was however emphatic on the point that no "gold" could make a nation free from foreign domination. Organisation of the masses was an essential condition. He wel--

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came to study and learn from the experiences of the Russian Revolution, take necessary training there, and thereafter to go back to India and start organising the masses.

The second demand was born of malice. Lenin, therefore, emphatically told the delegates that there was no ground for questioning Roy's representative character. He was the one man in the colonial countries who had with convictions and courage organised the Communist Party in a country where he was originally a political refugee. He proved his mettle by heroically fighting for the cause of the oppressed people of Mexico. Lenin had no objection to accept any person of merit besides Roy, and said, that the latter would be too glad to cooperate with him.

To Lenin, Roy was the embodiment of the revolutionary aspirations of the colonial masses to free themselves from imperialist exploitation. He had already known him; and nothing could change his opinion about the greatness of this man.

Lenin instructed the Commissar for foreign affairs to make arrangements for the Indian "revolutionaries" so that they could take necessary training while actually helping the cause of the revolution which had triumphed in Russia. To maintain the success of the revolution and to render every possible help to realise its task, so badly needed, for the establishment of the Socialist society, must be the concern of all the revolutionaries irrespective of any nationality.

Roy's compatriots were allotted their work and were sent up for training. In a few days time they

complained that they were not well-looking after and could not bear the discomforts. After all, they were not mere labourers ! They saw the " Russian Gold " was illusory. They were disillusioned under pressure of events.

The Red Army under Trotsky was fighting a life and death battle against the enemies of the Soviet Republic. Roy's compatriots would better go away to their comfortable lodgings in Berlin and other metropolitan cities of Europe, rather than stay in those unsettled conditions.

Lenin was informed of their discomfiture and thereupon he ordered their despatch beyond the Russian frontiers to any country of their choice. In a few days time the revolutionaries were tired of the revolution itself ! Lenin had put them to test and found them badly wanting. He wanted to measure their power of endurance. It cannot be so easily achieved. The Russians had to fight for years before they could reach the first planks of their goal. They had undergone an ordeal of indescribable sufferings. The Indian " Revolutionaries " could not stand the test; they preferred to leave for the Continent.

By the time Roy arrived in Moscow, the revolution had come out triumphant. Historic changes so far idealistically advocated and preached were taking place. Lenin had been able to translate the revolutionary principles of Marx into practice; for he had guided even from his exile the struggle of the Russian masses from stage to stage on the basis of these principles.

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As a result of the revolutionary upheaval in 1905 some sort of a mock parliament (Duma) was created with Nicholas II as its autocratic head. This continued for over a decade but new forces began to appear on the horizons of Russian politics. The forces making for the revolutions of 1917 were gathering momentum. The world war and the unabated oppression and exploitation of the masses of the Russian people were the chief factors for the development of mass discontent.

In February (March) the masses rose in a revolt against the rule of the Duma and Nicholas II. The rising tide of revolution swept away the autocratic monarchy. The Tsar abdicated. The democratic masses came out triumphant. But the so called "provisional Government" with Kerensky as its head was established. Lenin and his party did not oppose the formation of this Government, for it only expressed the then political consciousness of the masses who had yet to be convinced of the impotency of Kerensky and his colleagues on the provisional government formed and of the necessity of a **revolutionary government** democratic enough to consciously defend and safeguard their interests.

Between February and October (March and November) a sharpening of political and economic crisis had taken place. The masses were demanding of the Kerensky Government the implementing of their demands. But the "Provisional Government" could make pious promises to the impatient masses of the peasantry and asked them to wait. They had waited enough to be patient any more. They demanded, "Either Kerensky must go or he must fulfil his promises." The peasantry

wanted land and wherewithal to exist; the workers wanted bread and human conditions of living and work; the soldiers would not fight against the "enemy" under a government which would not protect their rights and interests and therefore demanded "peace".

The "Socialists" and the right "social revolutionaries" were on their trial. They were afraid of the revolution itself. They refused even to act according to their previous preaching. The masses saw the game. The peasant masses were getting more and more restless. The "Provisional Government" of Kerensky—the "socialist"—would not move. The Bolsheviks had not until then appeared on the scene. Nevertheless they were gaining ground. They were watching the masses.

Having made sure of the support of the masses of the peasantry, they (Bolsheviks) began to raise their head in the midst of this confusion. They saw, the masses were in a revolutionary temper. They boldly appeared on the scene and showed the masses the way to the realisation of their demands. It lay in the overthrow of the impotent "provisional government" and transfer of all power to the Congress of the Soviets.

In October the revolution reached its highest stage of development. The proletarian masses in alliance with the revolutionary soldiers¹ captured power. The Congress of the Soviets² became the democratic revolutionary government of Russia.

1. Soldiers came essentially from peasantry.

2. Soviets are councils of workers, soldiers and peasantry.

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This was the result positively achieved, for, the Bolsheviks would go always with the masses, gauge their consciousness, help them to get it in actual struggle and then would appear before them with definite plan of action, the execution of which was a necessary condition for the success of the revolution.

The Soviet Government, besides enforcing the demands of the peasant masses, workers, and soldiers, declared themselves in favour of the right of self-determination of every nation and proclaimed themselves also against any encroachment of their power over any other country. Moreover they openly announced that Russia would stand by the aspirations of those oppressed peoples of the world who were fighting for their liberty from foreign imperialism and freedom from the exploitation of native capitalism.

Much had yet to be done. The success of the revolution by itself would not suffice. The task of the revolution had to be realised. The dictatorship of the Soviets established was a transitional state between the overthrow of the old order of society and the establishment of socialism. It must perform its historic task of transforming the entire population—both urban and rural into a Socio-homogenous whole—detached entirely from the institution of private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange. The development of Russia in this direction will alone transform her into a mighty helping hand for the success of the world revolution.

In Russia two revolutions—February and October—belonging to different epochs of history overlapped ea-

ch other. As a matter of fact the latter had begun long before the task of the former was realised. Nevertheless the type of the State thrown up by this historic revolutionary process was undoubtedly a "Soviet Dictatorship". The form and the nature of a State whatsoever is determined by the character and the leadership of the revolution. Essentially all States are dictatorships—veiled or open. Therefore nothing abnormal had happened in Russia.

In the modern industrial countries of the West and America, the parliamentary forms of States as represented by the House of Commons, the Chamber of Deputies in France and the American Congress are nothing but veiled dictatorships of the capitalist classes of these countries.

It is true, the masses of the people there are allowed their elementary democratic rights to freedom of speech, press, association and assembly. It is true, there, the standard of living is higher than that exists for the masses of the people in the backward countries, such as China and India. It is true, there they have a "vote".

Looked at from the stand-point of the enforcement of their will on the major political and economic questions—such as abolition of unemployment, real democratic control over the material and economic resources of their respective countries etc., by itself this "democratic" right to elect their own representatives to parliaments is of no value whatsoever. There, they are compelled to take to mass revolutionary actions and if possible

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overthrow the veiled dictatorships of the capitalist classes with a view to create conditions for real democratic freedom.

But the present Fascist state of Italy under Mussolini and its replica in Nazi Germany under Hitler are, without any democratic pretence, open dictatorships of the capitalist classes. They are naked weapons in the hands of the henchmen and apologists of decaying capitalism. To begin with, all the elementary democratic rights of the masses of the people namely freedom of speech, press, and assembly are ruthlessly suppressed. The interests of the working masses are utterly disregarded. The policy of land-grabing and acquiring control over the economic and material resources of the industrially backward countries of the world is greedily pursued. And in order to ward off the revolutionary crisis in these countries, wars of aggression are shamelessly launched against unarmed backward peoples of the world.* Thus without much-ado about democracy, all possible attempts are made to prevent the collapse of the decadent and out-grown capitalist order of society.

On the other hand the Russian State of "Soviet Dictatorship" which was thrown up in course of the struggle of the masses for real democratic freedom, deals a death blow to the decadent system of an old and tottering order of society. It wipes out all the reactionary elements; dislodges the expropriators from the position of

* Aggression of Abyssinia by Fascist Italy under Mussolini and greed of Hitler for colonies.

vantage; defends fully the interests of the democratic masses and especially those of the proletariat. It steadily leads them on to the road to modernisation by introduction of a system of economy based on the revolutionary principles of Marxism, namely, abolition of the private ownership in the means of production, distribution and exchange. After this is done, the exploitation of man by man is abolished. The revolutionary transitional State "withers" away. A classless society is established. The much desired goal for the establishment of Socialism is achieved.

It is erroneous to believe that there exists to-day socialist society in Russia. She is to-day in the transitional period of her development towards the establishment of such a society. The new democratic Constitution† recently adopted is a definite advance in the direction of the fulfilment of her mission for the establishment of Socialism.

Indeed the Soviet Government representing the will of the democratic masses was established. But the Bolsheviks had to work hard enough to maintain it in power. The capitalist powers of the world were alarmed at the revolutionary changes that took place in Russia. They began surreptitiously fomenting civil war through the instrumentality of the remnants of the Tsarist regime with a view to overthrow the newly established revolutionary state.

Every help that Russia could get at this fateful moment not only was welcome, it was of a very great cons-

† See Appendix I

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quence. Roy who was a tried fighter in the cause of the oppressed peoples of the world could not remain merely an onlooker. He joined his heroic Russian comrades in the struggle for the stability of the newly established Soviet Government and the realisation of the task of the revolution. He was appointed to the post of a regimental commander of the Red Army and was elected as a member of the executive committee of the Moscow Soviet.

The successful revolution in Russia was followed by a series of revolutionary upheavals in a number of European countries.* The leadership of the Socialist and Social Democratic parties in these countries did not act up to its profession. It did not acquit itself from the questionable role that it played during the world war. It continued to play a second fiddle to the tune of the capitalist classes.

In this situation a bold and determined revolutionary leadership was required to deal with the international revolutionary crisis. The working classes in the industrial countries needed guidance and solidarity with their struggle against capitalism. The oppressed masses in the colonial countries of the world were seething with mass economic discontent.

The Second International—known as the Socialist Labour International, had reduced itself into a reformist body. Its important members such as the British Labour

* Overthrow of Monarchy in Germany;
The disintegration of Austrian Empire and
A Revolution in Hungary.

party and the Social Democratic parties in the European countries played hardly a creditable role in the critical revolutionary situation at home and abroad.

As a result, in a number of European countries the left wings of the Socialist and Social Democratic parties had split away and these were, later on, organised as Communist parties. Therefore to centralise the leadership of the international revolutionary working class movement, to consolidate the growing party of the international proletariat became the chief task of the moment for those revolutionary working class leaders who had already visualised its development.

Early in 1919 attempts made in this direction began to fructify. M. N. Roy was one of these leaders to take the initiative. He collaborated with Lenin and other leaders of the growing communist movements in various parts of the world in the foundation of the Communist International (known as the Third International). He also played an important role in the formulation of its basic principles, programme and tactics.

The first world Congress of the newly founded revolutionary International was held in Moscow in March 1919. Roy took a very prominent part in its deliberations. He was elected to its executive Committee and its Presidium (a pannel of presidents). He was also elected a member of its political Bureau of which Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, and other Soviet leaders were members.

On the Indian question too Roy collaborated with Lenin in preparing a thesis in which was embodied the

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programme and tactics to be followed by the Indian Communists in the national liberation movement in India. It was adopted by the International in 1920 and again endorsed by its Fourth Congress held in 1922 in Moscow.

Roy attended in all five Congresses of the Communist International and took very prominent part in the discussion of all the vital questions brought before these Congresses.

From 1919 to 1928, the Communist International actively helped a number of oppressed countries including Turkey, Persia, China, and India in the development of the national revolutionary movement of these countries. M. N. Roy was an outstanding leader of the International for over nine years.

CHAPTER XI.

In Russian Turkestan

It was the year 1920, Roy left for Russian Turkestan in the company of M. Borodin, Karakhan and Safarov. His mission on the Russo-Afghan frontier was to come in touch with events in India. He had also undertaken the arduous task of consolidating the Soviet Government in that part.

During this time a large number of young muslims from India came to Russian Turkestan and round about its border. They were persuaded to believe by propaganda carried on in India, that Britain was ready to attack the holy places of Mecca and Medina. They considered it their religious duty to defend these holy cities. Therefore they planned to enter a Muslim country and then make for Mecca for her defence against the broadcast British aggression. They were known therefore as Mohajirins.

When they reached Kabul, they had a surprise in store for them. King Amanullah was then the ru-

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ler of Afghanistan. He considered the problem of maintaining such an exodus of men from India. He put them under detention and later on advised them to return to India, as there was no attack contemplated Britain on the Holy Cities.

Most of these Mohajirins were students from the Punjab and Northern India. Amanullah had made it amply clear that they could not be permitted to stay in Afghanistan. Some of them therefore returned to India, some went over to Persia and some crossed the Russo-Afghan Frontier.

Roy managed to get in touch with these youths. They were persuaded to come over to Tashkent where he had founded a Military School and the "India-House." These youths joined him.

He took their personal care, helped them to understand the problems of India and their solution. He greatly succeeded in freeing them from their religious bigotry and winning them over for the cause of the freedom of India and that of the liberation of the oppressed masses of the world. These youths had marched out of India in defence of their sacred places of worship. But they were to return home as defenders of their country's liberty from foreign yoke and fighters for the cause of communism. Some of them have been the pioneers of the Communist movement in India; for, they had been equipped properly with the necessary political understanding and tactics to be followed under the then situation in India. Most of them got also military training at the military school organised and run by Roy at Tashkent.

Later on, the military school and the India House were closed down. But Roy continued his usual activities of training young Indians at the Eastern University of Moscow whose Indian section was under his control and working according to his direction.

By-and-by his trained followers returned to India for the purpose of spreading the principles and programme of the national revolutionary movement as advocated by Roy. Fazle Ilahi was the first to return to India. He was followed by many others including Usmani*.

They began the work of radicalisation of the rank and file of the nationalist movement in right earnest. But before long some of them were arrested under regulation III of 1818 and were in prison for some years before they were released. It is also well known, Usmani and Muzzafer the two noted followers of Roy played a very important role in the initial stages of the development of the movement in India.

*See Peshawar to Moscow—By Usmani.

CHAATER XII

On The European Continent

After his return from Tashkent to Moscow, Roy decided to carry on his propaganda from the Continent. He wanted eagerly to remain in organic touch with the movement in India. This he did through a large number of students, merchants, and Indian political leaders who visited Europe for various purposes.

He went to Switzerland and from Zurich he renewed his propaganda work for the political education of the rank and file of the nationalist movement in India. With this end in view he sat down to writing on India's varied political and economic problems. Amongst many of his writings, the following are important:—

1. What Do we Want ?* (1920)

* It is a small booklet giving an outline of the principles and the programme of the national independence movement in India.

2. The problems of India.* (1920)
3. **India In Transition.**¹ (1921)
4. One Year Of Non-Cooperation.² (1922)
5. The Aftermath of Non-cooperation.³ (1922)
6. Political Letters.⁴

From time to time, Roy's books and pamphlets began to arrive in large numbers in India. The radical elements and national revolutionaries were greatly attracted by them and many of them began to draw their political inspirations from them.

* It embodies Roy's views on Revolution.

1. This book was published from Geneva (Switzerland). It is a highly authoritative book. It gives a critical analysis of the Indian society and a clear perspective of the development of the Indian Nationalist movement. It is the most remarkable and brilliant contribution of Roy to the revolutionary political literature on India from the stand point of materialist interpretation of history. It is read all over the world by the rank and file of the International revolutionary proletarian movement. It is also considered the best work on India by eminent political thinkers and economists.
2. It was written in collaboration with Evelyn Roy. It is a review of the non-cooperation movement and its critique.
3. It is a collection of his articles published in his journals and in the International press after the Non-Cooperation movement.
4. This booklet contains his letters to his followers in India.

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Their spread in India did a good deal of useful propaganda work for the cause for which Roy, all along these years, was in exile.

Besides, Roy edited a number of journals, notably, the "Vanguard", The "Advanced Guard" and the "Indian masses". These were published from the metropolitan cities of Europe—London, Paris, Rome, Zurich and Berlin. These journals were the forum for the discussion of vital and burning problems of India. They were read by Indians abroad and also by the progressive radical elements in India.

Unfortunately all these books, pamphlets and journals have been proscribed by the British Indian Government; they were also exhibits in the Cawnpore and Meerut conspiracy cases. The Government of India also proscribed his book, "The Future of Indian Politics" which was published in 1926.

Of course Roy's main concern was the development of the national revolutionary movement in India and other oppressed colonial countries of the world. Nevertheless, he was also concerned with the advancement of the working class and Communist movements in various parts of the world. He was one of the chief spokesmen of the International Communist movement and as such it was a part of his revolutionary duty to help the development of these movements on the right line. His activities became therefore unpalatable to the olympian Gods of European capitalism. Thereupon he was expelled from one country after another. could not find refuge either in Switzerland,

Sweden, Norway, Holland, Germany, Belgium, France, or any other European country ruled and governed by the capitalist classes.

To England, he could never go. Never-the-less, during the General Election, the Communist Party of Great Britain put him up as its official candidate against Ramsay MacDonald, who later on became the prime minister of Britain, when in 1924, for the first time in the history of the British labour movement, the Labour party came into "power".

It was then, Roy was arrested in Paris by the French police, acting under the instructions of MacDonald's Government. This was done against the International Bourgeois Democratic law. But Roy managed to escape from the custody of his captors, while he was being taken across the French Frontiers. The plan was to get him somehow. He was a leading accused in the Cawnpore Bolshevik conspiracy case.

Roy addressed an "Open Letter" to MacDonald*-the socialist turn-coat. Therein he made a scathing criticism of his action and challenged his profession of Socialism. It was during his prime ministership that Congressmen, Trade Union workers and anti-imperialist fighters were prosecuted for their activities in the direction of developing the movement for national freedom to its success. And yet, MacDonald professed to

* Ramsay MacDonald is dead but he cannot be forgotten by Indians for his support to the exploitation of India by Imperialist Britain.

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be a "supporter of the movement for the right of the colonial peoples to self-determination and national freedom "!

This document is a memorable piece of literature in the world politics.

CHAPTER XIII.

A World Without A Visa.

To the capitalist world, Roy was a matter of danger to "peace and tranquility". His presence was repugnant to the ruling classes of the progressive countries of Europe, for, all of them with the exception of the U. S. S. R. were interested in the exploitation of the industrially backward countries of the world. Roy has been all along these years of exile an ardent fighter against the claim of the European capitalism to its "civilizing mission" in the East.

Therefore, he would not be allowed to stay in any one of these countries even as a political refugee. The very presence of this Indian would make the ruling classes of these countries nervous. They would order his arrest and hunt for him and if found out either put him in prison or deport him to a country which would in turn deport him to another. This was mainly due to a private diplomatic understanding between Great Britain and the Governments of these "civilised"

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countries. After his arrest in Paris and his subsequent escape from the police custody, Roy could stay in only one country—that was the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (Russia).

Under the conditions it became increasingly difficult for Roy to carry on his propaganda. He had to travel through various countries 'in cognito' to meet many Indian leaders and intellectuals who used to visit Europe. He would move secretly all the way from Moscow to the Continent whenever some Indians wished to see him.

Among the noted Indian leaders who especially desired to see him, were the late Maulana Mohammad-Ali, the late Pandit Motilaljee with his son Jawaherlal Nehru, Messrs. Bakhle, Kallappa, Srinivas Iyengar (Ex-President of the Indian National Congress), and many others.

It was in November 1927, Pandit Motilaljee along with Jawaherlal paid a visit to Russia and went to Moscow which has been all along the post-revolutionary period a centre of International revolutionary movement. Roy had just returned to Moscow from China where he was deputed by the Communist International as its sole delegate. It is said, Motilaljee would not miss the opportunity to meet Roy and discuss the vital questions affecting the Indian nationalist movement.

The Nehrus were officially received by the representatives of the Soviet Government. They were also given a public reception at the Red Square.

Motilaljee accompanied by Jawaherlal saw Roy who was then one of the foremost leaders of the Third International and the Head of its Colonial Department. It is said, inspite of certain disagreement that might be there, Motilaljee held Roy in very high esteem. Father and son had an interview with him; they discussed the question of the development of the Indian National liberation struggle. It is said, both the Indian leaders came out from Roy's study satisfied with what he had to say about the solution of the immediate problems of India.

CHAPTER XIV.

To The Rescue Of The Chinese Revolution

China is a vast country covering an area of about four millions Sq. miles. Geographically it includes the Manchurian " Empire," × Inner-Mongolia + , Outer-Mongolia*, Tibet §, Sinkiang††, and the rest of China—un-

× A result of military aggression of China by Japan in 1894. China was defeated and therefore she ceded to Japan, Ferosa Pescadores and the Liaotung Peninsula in Manchuria. Again in 1931 on the plausible pretext of an alleged murder of a Japanese, she occupied Manchuria which is held by her till to-day.

+ Inner-Mongolia is a disputed area between China and Manchukuo.

*. Outer-Mongolia having a Soviet Republic, is closely allied with the U. S. S. R.

§. Tibet—technically speaking, a part of China is nevertheless politically more with the British sphere of influence than that of the Chinese.

††. Sinkiang—otherwise known as Chinese Turkestan

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der the control of foreign imperialist powers as well as the Chinese themselves.

She has a huge population of nearly 500 millions which indeed constitutes nearly a quarter of the world population. Her people have been highly civilised, for, she has a distinct civilization* of her own.

The real social unit that has counted in the working of the Chinese society "has been smaller than the nation or the twenty or so great provinces in which the country is divided by long administrative traditions." This is the village coupled with family. Unmoved by the happenings national or provincial, it carries on unless disturbed by war. The Chinese peasant cannot be dissuaded from cultivating his land inspite of "threat or experience of devastation."

Nevertheless the family and the village hold together and manage to carry on through all the vicissitudes of life. Chinese village cannot be considered to be almost "isolated and self-centred" as is the case with the village of more primitive peoples.

China has been indeed a civilised country with a very strong cultural unity. Really speaking there has been an astounding freedom from rigid social distinction,† is formally a Chinese territory. But it is a battle ground of Central Asia.

*. Unlike other civilisations, the Chinese civilization did not grow out of the heliolithic culture.

†. Social distinctions do not preclude class differentiations.

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The educated is drawn from each stratum of Chinese society except the peasant or a landless labourer who is neither upto the Chinese nor the Western standard of education. So is the case with her militarists. They too come from all classes.

China has no system of hereditary distinctions and privileges,* nor are the religious differences so sharp as to obstruct the future unification of China. Most of the Chinese are Buddhists; but Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism with its universally observed cult of ancestral worship exist side by side. Often the same person is found practising all the three.

The Chinese religions have got certain distinct features as compared to the religions of the West. Broadly speaking Confucianism is an ethical doctrine practically void of ceremonial rites and theology. It lays down as a matter of fact a particular attitude towards life. There is hardly any emotional contents as is generally associated with various religions of the world.

Buddhism as well as Taoism on the other hand is full of ceremonial performances with hardly any ethical contents. There is also very little emotion. Chinese politics therefore is not guided by these religious differences. The ethics of the Chinese is personal and political. The Chinese political aspirations are in no way confronted with the danger of being side-tracked

* China is free from hereditary distinctions and privileges which are genearily the features of the present day Japanese Society, and unlike India, China has no caste system and therefore no untouchability.

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by religious differences. Besides, there are about 20 million Muslims and about 4 million Christians.

Left alone by herself, China would have made a rapid progress in the van of modern civilization. But her normal course was cut off by the intervention of foreign imperialism. Knowing the possibilities for an unlimited profit from the exploitation of China—her market, material resources and labour, European capital began to penetrate into the country. Large amount of capital began to be invested in establishing industries on the soil of China. In course of time China became a profitable market for Japan, America and other Industrial powers of Europe.

To begin with, foreign capitalism started under the pretext of its "civilising mission." American missionaries began the work of organising Schools and Colleges. But the Chinese did, and even now, suspect the motive of the benevolent missionaries. As a matter of fact the "civilising mission" of the apostles of "learning and knowledge" was followed closely by the penetration of the foreign capital into China.

The moment foreign imperialists got a foot-hold on the soil of China, they began to interfere in her political affairs. By-and-by they occupied her important and strategic parts. This was done either by means of annexation or concessions under some sort of lease. As far back as 1841, Honkong—a principal port of China was annexed and is a British possession. Similarly the French in 1898 "acquired" Kwang-Chau-Wan an important portion in the South West of China,

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under ninety nine years lease. Japan had sufficiently grabbed the Chinese territories § and in 1915 occupied the only German Possession—the Fortress of Kiauchau. Shanghai* one of the main ports of China has been an international settlement controlled by an international administration wholly independent of China. The British also possessed Wei-hai-wei † and Hankow. ‡ The Belgians had a concession at Tientstin. ††

Besides, there are throughout the country numerous treaty ports including some inland ports on the rivers in which foreigners have special rights. Recently a number of concessions have been reduced. Nevertheless the existing settlements on the Chinese soil command the external Chinese commerce carried on through Hongkong and Shanghai—the latter being the most important centre of Chinese industrial development.

Foreign territorial acquisitions in China, concessions and control over her economic and material resources have been greatly facilitated through the instru-

§ See the footnote × on page 72

* Shanghai has more than one million inhabitants of whom all but 30,000 are Chinese.

† Wei-hai-wei was returned to China in 1931.

‡ Hankow was not reoccupied after it was captured by the Chinese in 1926.

†† Tientstin was also siezed by the Chinese and was not reoccupied by the Belgians.

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mentality of the Chinese militarists* who would readily become tools in the hands of foreign vested interests.

For a number of years an ugly feature of the Chinese politics has been internecine civil war between these militarists. One civil war after another would devastate vast and densely populated areas. Moreover flood, pestilence and famine would add to the toll of war. Millions of them would be evicted from their homes. Bandits marching about the country living on the land and laying it waste would make the life insecure. This has been the result due to the the tottering old feudal order of society and prevention of the country's normal development by foreign imperialist exploiters.

None-the-less she came in touch with the modern civilization of the West. Articles manufactured in the industrial countries of Europe reached her farthest corner. The old hand-craft industry was breaking down under the impact of the machine made goods, while her agriculture remained just the same with all the ugly features of the antique days.

With the establishment of modern industry in China, a revolutionary class—the proletariat—the deadliest enemy of the capitalist-imperialism gradually grew up. The continued exploitation of Chinese labour and material resources reduced the economic condition of the

* The Condition of the Chinese masses is so much pauperized that any one ready to give three months advance wages to the peasants can easily become a "military general" with an army.

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people from bad to worse. This resulted into mass economic discontent. The peasants began to show restlessness as they too were reduced to a state of pauperisation. There had been misery, hunger, starvation illiteracy and Zulum of military generals throughout the country. China became in course of time a veritable hell for the large masses of humanity; and strangely enough under the shibboleth of "civilizing mission" !

This led to the rise of revolutionary political thoughts. These were gradually gaining ground. Students who had visited Europe and America became in the initial stage a mouth piece of the existing discontent. But they could not develop a successful movement to a higher level, as it was without any definite revolutionary ideology and necessary programme.

Eventually, a political party under the name of the Kuo Min Tang-(the National Congress of China) came into existence. In the early stages, it was merely a meeting ground or platform of learned politicians to debate questions of so called national importance. And it was only in the post-war period that the Kuo-Min Tang became an organised party worth its name.

Just as in India, there-too, as a result of the World War which led to intensive exploitation of China, a mass movement was growing up under the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang. Nevertheless its leadership was then reactionary and the movement had no definite programme required to organise the masses of the people.

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Long before the World War, Chinese national democratic revolution had begun and the beginning of the twentieth century was marked by one of the most important historical events in China. This was the Boxer Revolt which was but a stage in the development of the revolutionary national democratic movement.*

The so called revolution of 1911 which is generally believed to have overthrown the Manchu Dynasty, established a Republic not worth its name; for, it did not change the conditions of the Chinese masses from a state of pauperisation to prosperity; it did not in any case do away with the relics of the by-gone days; it did not revolutionize the conditions, methods and modes of production in the agricultural industry; above all it did not prevent the exploitation of China by foreign imperialist powers.

As a matter of fact the Manchu Dynasty fell without any effort. It had outlived its own time and therefore it disappeared as a social organic necessity. It was a Monarchy in name; The real political and economic control of China rested with the foreign capitalist powers, functioning through the instrumentality of the Chinese War-Lords. The republic therefore was

* Following the "murder" of a German Minister in Peking the forces of international imperialism composed of the British, French, American, German Japanese, Italian and Austro-Hungarian marched on Peking and occupied that city.

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only in name. The struggle for the establishment of a revolutionary sovereign state was yet to come.

It was in the year 1919, which brought the war to an end, that the people of China began to realise that on account of the continued intrigues of foreign imperialist powers to share the spoils of the loot, their condition was being reduced to that of veritable slaves; and that too under a "sovereign republic"! They had no sovereignty, for it was transferred in course of time to the International Combine of capitalist imperialism; otherwise; it would not have suppressed the Tipping and the the Boxers' rebellions which were nothing but stages in the development of the national liberation movement.

In the pre-war period, Sun Yat Sen and his followers were guided by the American political thoughts. And during the process of the World War when Japan undertook to "liberate the Eastern countries from the domination of the European imperialism,"* Dr. Sun readily supported Japanese imperialism and that too, at the cost of the Chinese masses! Surely he did so unwittingly.

The World War was over: the Treaty of Versailles simply gave Japan control over certain ports of China, in order to silence her on the question of European and American colonial possessions. Naturally China was shocked and the whole country rose against this injustice.

* The "liberating mission" of Japanese imperialism was none other than the transformation of China into her protectorate.

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ce, for, she had helped the allies during the War. The "reward" to China for services and active support for the success of the allies in the War was indeed unexpected. The people realised the necessity of shaking off lethargy and of preparing to assert their rights to freedom. In 1919 signs of a huge revolutionary mass movement was visible.

Students and younger intellectuals were the first to take the lead in organising a movement in opposition to the Treaty of Versailles. These advocated boycott of Japanese goods. Petty traders, poor middle class masses, artisans and workers joined the movement. Nevertheless the boycott collapsed as it affected the traders in the long run. All the same it did leave deep traces of the national revolutionary struggle.

In this crisis a need for a well organised political party was greatly felt and the Kuo Min Tang once again appeared on the scene as the political organ for the expression of the anti-imperialist spirit of the Chinese masses. Dr. Sun Yat Sen became the leader of this movement.

Industrial development of China brought about by foreign capital had ushered in the birth of a new class—the proletariat. Prof. Tu-hsin of the University of Peking was the first to herald the rise of this new factor. He became an ardent exponent of the ideology of the working class.

Chinese people were being educated politically, so that they could see that their enemies were not

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only foreign imperialists but also the native feudal lords. These two factors were responsible for the common plunder of China to the best of their advantage. By-and-by the old ideology was discarded in favour of a new one. The missing social contents into the emotional and "setimentalist" ideology was supplied by Chen Tu-hsin.

The movement of 1919 brought about the eventual down-fall of the pro-Jap-Government at Peking. This greatly facilitated the organisation of the local and provincial branches of the Kuo Min Tang. However it yet lacked the necessary ideological conception and a well formulated programme based on the general strivings of the people of China. Its leader, brought up politically in secret revolutionry activities, could not nce grasp the whole implication of the movement for her national liberation.

Nevertheless the working class—the most oppressed of all the classes, time and again, appeared on the scene independently and heriocrally fought out a series of strikes for the enforcement of its demands.

China is not far away from Russia. The success of the Revolution in the semi-Asiatic country—Russia, had greatly influenced the Chinese national revolutionary movement and the struggle of the working class against foreign capitalism and native reactionaries.

It was the representative of the Soviet Russia in China, who could see clearly the need for the reorga-

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nisation of the Kuo Min Tang on the basis of a well formulated programme of national liberation.

Already the Second World Congress of the Communist International in 1920 had adopted a thesis on the national and colonial questions. It was thereby resolved that " the Communists in the colonial countries must support the nationalist bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism and the Communists in the capitalist countries should organise the working class to give every possible support for the national emancipation movements in the colonial countries. "

In compliance with the decision of the Second World Congress, the Communist International* called upon the working class of the whole world to support the Chinese national movement. It also directed the Chinese Communist Party to effect a united front with the Kuo Min Tang (The National Congress of China) by making it obligatory for its members to work actively in the nationalist movement under the banner of the Kuo Min Tang.

Under the given situation in China, the working class and the peasant masses could be moved into gigantic mass actions only on the basis of the nationalist demands rather than their own class demands. It was therefore not possible, to bring them directly under the leadership of the C. P. of China, for, the

* It laid down the basic principles and the programme of the movement under the personal guidance of its founder, Lenin.

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masses then were in a state of backward class consciousness. They could indeed be brought into an organised struggle under the flag of the national democratic revolution. In the early stage of the struggle the masses and the young proletariat accepted the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang.

Mass awakening resulted into a crisis in the Kuo Min Tang. The reactionary vested interests and the militarists contended that Dr. Sun was attracted by "Communism", because he had declared already that an alliance between the C. P. and the Kuo Min Tang was desirable; that Russia was the only friend of the oppressed colonial peoples.

A sharp struggle between the reactionary vested interests and the democratic petty bourgeois forces within the Kuo Min Tang ensued. This was an essential feature of the Chinese movement. The ranks of the petty bourgeois democratic elements were reinforced by the masses of the peasantry*. Nevertheless their radicalism could only fructify positively under the dynamic influence and continued pressure of the working class.

The democratic masses were quite inclined to cooperate with the Communists for the creation of a revolutionary leadership as an alternative to the old one. But at the same time they would not be ready to work under the direct leadership of the Communist Party. The masses of peasantry were rallying round the banner

* Peasantry is essentially a petty bourgeois force, for, it is not divorced completely from the institution of private property.

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of the Kuo Min Tang. The Communists in alliance with the followers of Dr. Sun who unequivocally stood for the liberation of China from imperialist powers of the world, were indeed able to place the leadership of the struggle for freedom, into the hands of the Petty-bourgeois democratic leaders.

Thanks to the close supervision by the leadership of the Communist International over the working of its Chinese section, the Communists by and by got over the ultra-left tendencies. The Chinese Communist Party adopted correct tactics. But for this fundamental change in the tactical outlook of the communists, the radicalisation of the forces of national democratic struggle could not have been speeded up. M. N. Roy* was greatly responsible in the proper application of Leninist tactics to the situation in China.

This resulted into the reorganisation of the Kuo Min Tang in 1924. Until then the Communist Party too had a few hundred members. These came from among the students and young intellectuals. But the united front with the Kuo Min Tang on the basis of the programme of the national democratic revolution† greatly accelerated the

* Long before the foundation of the Communist International, Roy was twice in China and had met and known Dr. Sun Yat Sen. He was well-acquainted with the complex problem of China and therefore could make a correct approach to the situation in that country.

† The programme of the National Democratic Revolution is not the programme of the Socialist revolution that is to say-of Communism.

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tempo of the building up of the Communist Party on the one hand and the transformation of the Kuo Min Tang into a revolutionary organ of national liberation, on the other.

Already things were shaping well. At Canton a nationalist government was established. It was transformed into the revolutionary democratic dictatorship defending the rights and interests of the masses. This was mainly due to the opposition of the big vested interests to the democratic demands of the petty bourgeois masses. The Cantonese Government was successfully able to repel all the attacks of British imperialism which were directed from Honkong.

The Communists were able to organise every industrial worker. Peasant leagues were established throughout the country; the membership of the Communist Party rose from a few hundred to nearly 60,000. The membership of its auxiliary youth organisation went up to nearly 40,000. Moreover the Chinese Federation of Labour with over two million members came under the direct leadership of the Communists. A rise was also noticed in the membership of the peasant organisations from a few thousand to seven millions. All these happened in a short space of time.

A general strike broke out in Honkong which was blockaded for a year (1926) by land and sea.

§ Peasant leagues were not organised in opposition to the national liberation movement under the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang.

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British trade and commerce was brought to a standstill. This greatly undermined the reputation of the mighty imperialist Britain. Only a short time before the development of the national struggle the Chinese "Coolie" was a beast of burden in the eye of the foreign imperialists. But now he was facing like man his exploiters and was victoriously accomplishing his journey—though uphill, with courage and determination. It was only in a couple of years that the wonderful organisational work* was done.

The awakening of the peasant masses, the transformation of the Kuo Min Tang into a revolutionary democratic platform, the mass organisation of the industrial labour under the Communist leadership, and the important position occupied by the Communists in the Kuo Min Tang were more than sufficient reasons for the agents of the driven out reactionary forces—still present in the reorganised Kuo Min Tang, "to accuse the Communists of creating breach into the ranks of the nationalists." The critical revolutionary situation in the villages terrified them.

At this moment the left-forces stood in a position from which they could not easily withdraw. They wavered to take a definite stand. The exigencies of the

* Between 1924-26 Canton became a base for a great revolutionary democratic movement which developed in a very short period. This was done under the Flag of the Kuo Min Tang which in turn could not become a revolutionary platform except with an alliance with the Communists.

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situation demanded quick and decisive action on the part of the left wing under the guidance of the Communists.

Chen Tu-hsin, a former left Communist who was formerly against any alliance with the Kuo Min Tang, now would not agree to the peasants attacking Chinese feudalism and thus free themselves from the parasitic pre-capitalist exploitation. Should China travel in the van of modern civilisation, her rural economy must be freed from pre-capitalist mode and conditions of production.

In course of the struggle, the relation of forces had definitely changed inside the very ranks of the nationalist movement. Class struggle sharpened increasingly. The exigencies of the changed situation demanded also a change in the tactics.

Critical situation in China demanded the intervention of the leadership of the International revolutionary working class movement. Therefore an urgent plenary session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was held in Moscow (November, 1926) to discuss the Chinese situation and to chalk out a line to be followed.

A resolution drafted by M. N. Roy† came up for discussion at this meeting. The Trotsky group also proposed a line demanding "immediate break with

† M. N. Roy who was a member of the political Bureau of the C. I. was also in charge of the Colonial Department.

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the Kuo Min Tang and advocating the slogan of the Soviet". The Executive Committee after full deliberation rejected on the one hand the ultra-left line of the Trotsky group and the opportunist line of the C. P. of China under the guidance of Borodin§, on the other. It adopted the line indicated in the resolution proposed by Roy. It is said, Stalin at this meeting was not in favour of the demand for "Nationalisation of land" formulated in the said resolution.

Under the circumstances then existing, the Communists were in a position to bring pressure upon the nationalist forces. It was on the report of such a situation that the Executive Committee of the International recommended the policy × of supporting the Wuhan Government and advised the Communists to enter it. It was a possible platform for a petty bourgeois radicalism. It was also an instrument to rally round the nationalist rank and file in a well thoughtout and determined struggle against the then reactionary leadership†† of the Kuo Min Tang.

But the Communist Party did not take a decisive action. It went so far as to postpone the agrarian revolution. Of course this was done with the object

§ Michiel Borodin, a noted Russian leader was in China ever since the beginning of the movement and was all along the adviser of the Communist Party.

× As embodied in the resolution of Roy.

†† Dr. Sun died in 1925 and ever since his death the reactionaries managed to get into the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang.

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of securing an alliance with feudal militarists in a fight against the reactionaries headed by Chiang Kai-Shek.

It was Stalin-the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Russia who proposed that Roy be elected as the sole delegate of the Communist International and insisted that he should go to China at the earliest possible opportunity. Thereupon, Roy prepared himself to leave for China.

All the necessary precautions were taken to maintain complete secrecy regarding Roy's departure from Russia to China. In a ship specially chartered for the purpose and escorted by aeroplanes, Roy was making his way towards his destination. In the mid-stream, a wire-less message received, stated that there were activities among the British forces at the port of the ship's destination. Roy was thereupon transferred to another boat; and when the former ship reached her destination, it was searched by the authorities concerned. But Roy was found to have escaped. Eventually he reached China without any mishap whatsoever sometime in the beginning of 1927.

By the time Roy arrived in China, the situation had gone from bad to worse. Practically the game was lost. Only quick and decisive action on the part of the revolutionary left wing forces headed by the Communists could save it from the coming disaster.

The line indicated by the new resolution of the Executive Committee of the C. I. was indeed accepted by the C. P. of China. Nevertheless its leadership set itself to sabotaging its application! This was mainly

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due to Borodin's unfortunate obstinacy to rigidly stick to the old tactics formulated in the early stage of the national democratic revolution. He telegraphed to Moscow opposing the new policy of the Central Executive Committee. He held, "the officers of the nationalist army, all come from the land-owning classes; they do not support the programme of the agrarian revolution; and the suggested application of the programme of the agrarian revolution would put the army against the nationalist Government." What a concern for the military officers ! The soldiers employed in the nationalist army were really to be counted upon. En-masse, they came from the peasantry and therefore would have very much welcomed an agrarian revolution which was the urgent need of the moment. On the one hand there was indecisiveness on the part of the leadership of the C. P. of China and on the other the agents of the reactionary forces were secretly conspiring with foreign imperialist powers with a view to turn the tide of revolution into the counter-revolution.

Early in 1927 Roy went to Canton and there he set himself to the task of saving the revolution. He found that the Communists were reluctant to attack Chiang Kai Shek.* In the province of Kiang-si occupied by his army, peasants and workers were oppressed and persecuted. Chiang-Kai-Shek was carrying on secret negotiations with Chinese reactionaries and the foreign imperialist. Japanese Envoys had paid him secret visits. When the working class—the vanguard of the national democratic revolution was boldly facing and defying the

* He took his military education at Moscow.

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army of international imperialism, his whole army in Shanghai stood inactive. Even when the proletarian masses were at the mercy of the rising counter-revolution, he did not even raise his finger against it. He wanted one thing—purge the Kuo Min Tang of the Communists. Therefore he demanded of the Wuhan Government to take an offensive against the Communists, the nationalist left forces and suppress the workers and peasants' organisations. He threatened, he would destroy the Nationalist Government.

In this situation Borodin refused to cooperate with Roy. With great difficulty he persuaded the Communists in Canton to come out with a manifesto in the name of all mass organisations in the city demanding an immediate explanation from Chiang Kai Shek and giving the slogan, "Call back Wang-Chi-Wei."† The object of the manifesto was to rally the bulk of the Kuo Min Tang membership against the counter-revolutionary betrayal of Chiang Kai Shek.

The slogan about the return of the Wang-Chi-Wei was quite opportune. He commanded great influence.

Roy who was personally organising the movement, found that between Canton and Wuhan, practically all the villages and the towns had taken up the slogan. Mass meetings were held everywhere for the purpose. With the help of those Chinese Communists who agreed

† Wang-Chi-Wei was the accepted leader of the nationalist masses after the death of Dr. Sun Yat Sen in 1925.

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with him, he organised a strong anti-Chiang-Kai-Shek movement in the province of Hunan too.

Hunan was the domain of Tang-Shin-Chi, who had become the Generalissimo of the Wuhan army. He helped secretly the anti-Chiang Kai Shek movement which was spreading very rapidly all over the province. He (Tang Shin-Chi) did this, because he aspired to be in charge of the entire national army, should Chiang be dislodged. The campaign against Chiang indeed received tremendous support. But it soon fizzled out as the political and wider national objectives were superseded by personal jealousies and enmities.

The Wuhan Government proposed a military expedition in alliance with Feng and Tang-Shin-Chi against Chiang. But this was pregnant with great danger to the revolution. Feng was secretly carrying on negotiations with Chiang and Tang-Shin-Chi did not want to help the revolution but was working for his ambition. He greedily desired to be the dictator of Wuhan.

Roy was opposed to this projected military adventure. It would increase the military strength of the nationalist government, which would in turn be used in counter-acting the dominating influence of the masses of the people. Giving the excuse of the war, the government would ask for peace in the rear. This would only help the reactionaries to recover their position and resume the offensive.

Therefore Roy proposed an alternative action. It was to "strengthen the base provinces of Hupeh and Hunan of the Wuhan Government by exterminating

the reactionary forces (existing in these very provinces); then to extend its powers in the provinces of Kwang-tung and Kwang-si".* A powerful mass movement had developed in these provinces on the occasion of the march of the Cantonese army to the Yangtze.† A million workers and five times as many peasants were organised. General political consciousness was up to the situation. This line of action would firmly have established the Wuhan Government on a stable basis.

Shanghai, then, could be easily encircled defeating the combined forces of Chiang and the international imperialism.†† Holding the Lunghai Railway—joining the two trunk lines and connecting Peking and Yangtze as the base for military operations, Feng might be asked to advance eastward to threaten the flank of Chiang, so that he could successfully press towards the North.

Unfortunately Borodin took a defeatist attitude and advocated a retreat. The Communist leadership in China did not fall in line with Roy. It simply argued, Roy's plan would amount to a break with the Kuo Min Tang!

The Communists held the key-position. The Wuhan Government ought to have been given to understand that the Communist Party would not support such a

* M. N. Roy—"Revolution and Counter-revolution in China"—Berlin.

† It is the largest and the chief navigable river of China.

†† An interesting incident occurred at Shanghai. Practically all the foreign imperialist powers of the

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mis-adventure. It would have been given up. **Instead of dictating, they capitulated.** They held, "any insistence on the solution of the agrarian problem in the nationalist territories would mean war with the Kuo Min Tang!" When the dispute was referred to Moscow by Roy, to his surprise the reply was ambiguous. It approved of both the views. How on earth could both these things be done at a time?

The perspective as given by Roy was correct. The moment the projected military operations began, the nationalist Government demanded the suspension of the struggle in the rear. To begin with strikes were prohibited on the ground that any interference with the industry, trade and transport adversely affected the supply of the requirements for the army. Anti-imperialist activities were also forbidden on the plausible plea that Nationalist Government could not risk any diplomatic difficulties when the national army was fighting on the front. And in order to meet the war world had stationed sufficient number of troops, gun-boats, and warships. This was done on the pretext of guarding the lives and properties of the nationals of each of these countries. As a matter of fact China was invaded by counter-revolutionary forces of international imperialism. In the port of Shanghai when political situation was tense, 5,000 French Marines were landed on the shores. Hearing this, Roy accompanied by a French Communist got in touch with the dependable elements among them. As a result of the discussion between them they (Marines) were convinced of the cause of the Chinese national liberation stru-

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situation, extra-loans were raised and extra taxes were levied. Prices went up, for, the merchants immediately passed on the burden of taxation and loans to the masses. On the other hand the industrial workers could not demand any increase in their wages, as that would be construed as the dislocation of the industries. This was all to the advantage of the owners. They reduced the wages of the workers on the "patriotic" plea of economy in time of war. Workers were asked to do overtime labour as "a revolutionary duty". The peasants were asked not to keep any stock of rice as that would be needed for the requirements of the national army. The peasants lost while the landlords and the merchants filled up their pockets. Any one opposing this development was denounced as a counter-revolutionary !

These naturally curbed the militancy of the peasant movement. Social peace in the rear of the army was the slogan of the Nationalist Government at Wuhan. But this social peace only gave the landlords and the village gentry the time to prepare for the offensive upon the peasant masses, which soon began.

ggle. Next day when practically all of them had gathered together at an evening function, instead of singing the National Anthem of France, they sang aloud the 'Internationale.' Their superior officers grew wild. They were therefore ordered by the officers to get back on board the ship. But the Marines faithful to the cause of the oppressed masses of the world refused to obey the orders and arrested the officers.

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The projected military operation did not seem to be very encouraging. Feng was a doubtful being. He himself blockaded the entire road leading to Peking and advised the Wuhan Government to come to terms with Chiang Kai Shek! Tang Shin Chi seeing this situation quietly withdrew his troops to his original position and the Cantonese troops were made the cannon fodder who were finally annihilated.

In spite of this the counter-revolution was proceeding ahead from one stage to the other only to culminate into the bloodiest suppression of the forces of the national democratic revolution. The Communists were simply ordered by the Nationalist Government to go to the peasant masses and pacify them on the plea that they were driving the military officers to revolt. Borodin true to his opportunism got agitated at the "excesses" committed by the peasantry and sent on his followers to check the peasantry. This mistake on his part greatly helped the counter-revolution which was developing rapidly.

This was followed by a coup d'etat at Changsha, the Capital of Hunan throwing the Communists in the whirlpool of confusion. Borodin went so far as to instruct the Communist Minister of agriculture to go to Hunan and correct the "excesses" done by the peasantry!

M. N. Roy objected to it very emphatically. But his objection was disregarded by the all mighty Borodin. Roy proposed that the Minister of Agriculture

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might go to Hunan not to correct "excesses" done by the peasant masses but to set up village self-governments conferring political power and police duty on the peasants' unions.

Tam-Pin-Shan was the Minister for local self-Government and Police. * Therefore the action proposed by Roy was within his official competence. The fact was that the rank and file communists were eager to follow the line proposed by Roy but the Central Committee of the Party restrained them. Many of them however in disregard to the Central Committee's restraint order acted independently. These were condemned—both by the military reactionaries and also by the "Communist followers" of Borodin. Tam Pin-Shan's "peace mission" also did not materialise on account of the blockade created by the counter-revolutionary insurrectionists in Changsha.

The Nationalist Government looked upon the situation impotently. Tang-Shin-Chi its military chief was given the task of dealing with the counter-revolutionary insurgents. But he did not care to do any thing.

The insurgents—thus backed by Tang-Shin-Chi had threatened to march to Wuhan with a view to overthrow the Nationalist Government and demanded of the Government to suppress the revolutionary workers' and peasants' movements.

Roy's forecast based on the seriousness of the situation was entirely correct. Tang-Shin-Chi's army rose

* Tam was the Minister of Agriculture as well as he was in Charge of Local-Self-Government and Police.

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- against the Nationalist Government of Wuhan and marched on the Capital without any resistance. It was, of course, defeated by a revolutionary detachment organised by Communists under the able guidance of Gallen*.

In this situation how could the Communists keep quiet? Above all how can they so rigidly stick to the old tactical line forgetting the principles of the revolutionary democratic struggle? Any more silence on their part would mean nothing but the betrayal of the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese masses for liberation. Therefore Roy proposed that the Central Committee of the C. P. of China should address an Open Letter to the Kuo Min Tang exposing the latter's crimes of omission and commission. It should mean an ultimatum and signal for a general revolutionary offensive under the independent leadership of the Communist Party.

He also proposed the following concrete steps to be taken in that situation:—

“1. The peasants to be led in an attack upon Changsha supported by a quickly raised army commanded by the Communists and the revolutionary nationalists; 2. Strike in Hanyang arsenal with the demand that 25 percent of the arms and the munitions produced should be handed over to the Trade Unions, for the purpose of creating a Workers' Militia, as a guarantee against the counter-revolution; 3. A mass demonstration

* Gallen was a Russian Metal worker. He was the chief organiser of the nationalist army in China. Later on he rose to be Marshal Blutchet.

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to support the demand of the arsenal workers to endorse the "Open Letter" of the C. P. and the demand that the Nationalist Government and the Kuo Min Tang should immediately call upon the peasants to overthrow the counter-revolutionary insurgents of Changsha with a view to destroy the rural reaction; 4 This to be followed by a general strike to enforce the demands formulated by the demonstration; 5 Finally an armed up-rising to begin with the capture of the arsenal".*

Deceitism had overtaken the Communists and it was therefore very difficult for Roy to drag them out of it. Borodin had all along trained them in the school of opportunism and finally therefore they rigidly stuck to it. Trade Unions were declared illegal, people were deprived of their freedom of speech, press, organisation and assembly. Those agitating the workers for strike were ruthlessly punished. Again the foreign exploiters and the reactionaries began to treat the man in the street with same contempts as before !

Roy tried his level best to persuade the C. P. leaders to act as Communists, for any loss of time would mean the victory for the counter-revolution. But they stuck to the position taken up by Borodin. Good many local Chinese Communists and the Russians were in full agreement with Roy. Besides all those Indian nationalists†—notably Sikhs sympathetic with the

* M. N. Roy "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China"—Berlin.

† The events in China drew a good deal of attention of the Indian Nationalists. There were demonstrat-

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Chinese National liberation struggle had placed their services at the disposal of Roy.

Above all the chief organiser of the Chinese National army M. Gallen (Marshal Blucher) fully supported Roy and was in complete agreement with him. Finally the majority of the Russian Communists fell in line with Roy. Even then every thing rested with Borodin, for all power was with him, although Roy was supported politically by Moscow as against the opportunism of Borodin. The leaders of the C. P. of China who were his ideological disciples, followed him in utter disregard to the repeated instructions from the head-quarters of the International.

Realising that Borodin would not be removed, inspite of the entire disapproval of his opportunism by the International, Roy proposed the formula for collective responsibility to be vested in Borodin, Gallen and himself for an offensive against Chiang Kai Shek. Gallen was indeed a mighty military organiser and there was yet a chance to save the revolution. Gallen not only did agree with Roy but he was in favour of much earlier offensive against the rising counter-revolution. Never-the-less Borodin and his disciples would not move.

ions organised by them in support of the Chinese movement. And Pundit Motilal Nehru-the then leader of the Swaraj Party in the Central Legislature protested against the sending of British Indian troops to China to suppress the Chinese nationalist movement.

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Disgusted with the obstinacy of Borodin and leaving him in full control of the situation in China, Roy accompanied by Gallen left for Moscow.

CHAPTER XV.

Back To Moscow.

Along with a number of Russian Communists and Gallen—the chief organiser of the Chinese National Army, Roy returned to Moscow in September 1927.

By this time, an Indian “delegation” representing the Communist movement in India had arrived in Moscow to report on Indian situation. Thereupon a commission was appointed to examine the material submitted by the said delegation. Later on Roy was asked to draft a resolution* on the basis of the findings of the said commission. He did it.

Meanwhile in China a bloody counter-revolution which had begun long ago, resulted in the collapse of the entire edifice of the national democratic revolution.

Chiang Kai Shek—once an ally of the Communists—headed the counter-revolutionary forces. He was helped and abetted by foreign imperiatist powers. Workers,

* This resolution was never published by the C. E. C. of the C. I. See Chapter XVIII.

peasants (politically conscious), communists and above all the left wing members of the Kuo Min Tang were slaughtered. Even young girls wearing bobbed hair were suspected to be communistically inclined and therefore mercilessly murdered !

The first act of the drama of the National Democratic revolution was thus over. Never-the-less it had its reaction on the movements for national liberation of the colonial masses. The working class of the whole world was puzzled.

On arrival in Moscow, the first thing Roy did was to report on the situation in China. He wrote a brochure † describing the unfortunate happenings, clearly showing the main causes that led to the counter-revolution.

All along the revolutionary crisis the C. P. of China was dependent for its tactics on the advice of Borodin who unfortunately made principles out of the then out-grown tactics.

On the one hand when the masses of the people were prepared and waiting all along for a decisive offensive, on the other the Chinese reactionaries headed by Chiang were intriguing and making secret arrangements with the imperialist powers for a counter-revolution. A decisive action on the part of the C. P. of China would have indeed saved the revolution. But Borodin, its adviser only acted as a break to the independent development of tactics required by the new situation.

† It was published by the Central Executive Committee of the Communist International only in Russian.

The Russian leaders of the International did recognise the mistakes, but it was too late. Exasperated by the counter-revolution in China they went so far as to call upon the C. P. of China to take an offensive after it had been beaten and removed practically from all the position of vantage.

Due to strenuous work in China and his incessant activities throughout the long period of his exile, Roy physically broke down and as a result fell seriously ill. Later on he developed an ear trouble. For this he was treated and finally operated upon in Moscow. The operation did not come out successful and his condition became serious enough to put his friends and comrades into a dreadful anxiety. He was taken to Germany by air for treatment.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Sixth World Congress.

In the summer of 1928, the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International was held at Moscow with a view to review the world situation in the light of the development of the Communist and national liberation movements in the industrial and colonial countries of the world; and from the experience gained to formulate such tactics as would help the advancement of the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed masses all the world over. It was attended by delegates representing all its national sections. Never-the-less the Sixth World Congress was taking place in an atmosphere of defeatism brought about by the failure of the revolution in China.

For years Roy's views regarding the development of the national liberation movement in India and other colonial countries were the views of the Communist International. It was in conformity with his complete grasp over the problems of the oppressed colonial cou-

ntries that the Communist International laid down its tactical line in this respect (in 1922).

At this Congress when Indian question came up for discussion Roy's perspective of the development of the National Revolutionary Movement in India was severely criticised. In order to understand the complex problems of India, it is but necessary to examine the basic conditions of the course of development of our National Revolutionary Movement.

In India no serious challenge was made to her foreign imperialist rulers upto the end of the World War. In the beginning the leadership of the Indian National Congress feebly voiced the discontent of the Indian bourgeoisie with their conditions of political bondage and economic backwardness. But it did not advocate the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism. It did not raise the standard of revolt for the liberation of India; only it agitated for constitutional reforms. The terrorist revolutionary secret societies to which M. N. Roy once belonged, indeed, advocated the revolutionary overthrow of foreign domination. Nevertheless they could not deal with the problem* successfully as they had neither a programme based on the general revolutionary strivings of the masses of the people, nor the necessary modern outlook detached from the socio-religious ideology.

India is chiefly an agricultural country. Approximately 71 percent of her people i.e. to say about

* See Chapter IV.

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230 † millions live upon the proceeds of the agricultural and allied industries (pasture, dairy, hunting etc.) Of these 230 millions, only about 12 millions come under the category of rent receivers i. e. the princes, landlords and their families. The total annual income of this class of landlords is estimated to be about Rs. 180 crores. This income is altogether unearned, for, those receiving it do not perform any productive labour on land. Owing to the excessive over-crowding on the land the remaining 218 millions are mostly toiling peasants i. e. very few of them can be classed as exploiters of hired labour. Let it be noted that of these, 80 millions approximately (excluding non-working dependents—old, infirm, children etc. to each peasant family) can be classed as actual agricultural producers. Again about 40 millions of the peasantry live on agricultural wages that means approximately 13 millions (excluding dependents to each actual worker) of them are agricultural workers (wage-labourers).

The contemporary Indian society is not still free from the remnants of medieval and even primitive modes of production. The relation between the land owning classes and the peasantry in certain parts † of India and practically in all the native States smacks of feudalism. In other parts †† of the country primitive communal ownership is the basis of private property. Landlordism throughout the country largely represents

† This figure is pertaining to the period under review.

† Malbar, Oudh and Sind.

†† N. W. Frontier Province.

pre-capitalist exploitation. In some parts of the country elements of serfdom and even slavery † characterises the contemporary social relations. Never-the-less the present day Indian society is essentially capitalist.* In India the establishment of capitalist society has not been a normal process. Feudal absolutism was destroyed not by the native bourgeoisie but through the intervention of a foreign factor. Long before the advent of the European traders early forms of capitalist production had grown in India. Handicraft had greatly ceased to be confined in the self-contained village. It had largely concentrated in towns. The production was decisively for exchange. Consequently a prosperous class of traders had become an important social factor. The forces of the bourgeois revolution were clearly visible.

The normal process of social evolution was disturbed by foreign intervention. One basic condition for the establishment of the capitalist society was however

† "Veth" System in native States is nothing but slavery.

* Even under normal conditions of development capitalism does not necessarily exterminate all earlier social institutions completely. Divested of the absolute political power and therefore its prerogatives sufficiently restricted, the landed aristocracy may be allowed to continue in this parasitic existence inside the capitalist society. For example even to-day the semi-feudal aristocracy occupies a prominent place in the national economy and politics of England. In other capitalist countries, too, feudal landlords share power with the bourgeoisie.

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created. The decayed feudal absolutism was overthrown from political power. The new State set up by the foreign "conqueror" was an instrument of capitalist exploitation.

But in order to consolidate their power the British rulers of India in the earlier days of their domination created a new class of tax-farming landlords* with more or less feudal attributes. Pre-capitalist social relation, galvanised, became the basis of the capitalist exploitation.

The entire production of the Indian masses—no matter under however backward and in whichever remote corner of the country it may take place, is for exchange not only in the internal market as was largely the case before foreign intervention but in the competitive world market. Therefore it is capitalist production. Trade in commodities produced largely in the pre-capitalist conditions pauperised the producers thereby obstructing the modernisation of the mode of agricultural production and expansion of manufacturing industries.

As it is, half the cultivated land in India and all of it in the Native States is owned by a handful of

* Bihar, Bengal and Orissa have Zamindars enjoying permanent settlement. They may be classed either as tax-farmers or independent rent-receivers while the taluqdars of Oudh and landlords of Sind also possess feudal attributes but they are Zamindars holding land under temporary settlement.

parasitic rent-receivers. The owner of the remaining is the foreign government. So peasants throughout the country are expropriated. They perform labour under conditions in which the main means of production viz. land does not belong to them. The consequence of this social relation inevitably is the progressive pauperisation of the great bulk of the peasantry. The small fraction of the proceeds of their labour that remains with them after the payment of rent, taxes, and other numerous liabilities, obligations, levies, charges etc., represents rather wages than the profit of an independent producer.

In the case of handicraft producers some backward means of production (tools) may still belong to them but this formal ownership is rendered of little practical value by the capitalist control of all the means of distribution and exchange. The only source of credit open to the handicraft as well as the agricultural producers is usury. Deep in debt they are not in a position to get anything like a fair price for their wares. Their labour power and tools are practically mortgaged to money-lenders and the monopolist traders. The price of the agricultural produce is dictated by the usurious trade even before the production takes place. Together with landlord the money-lender and the trader dominate the entire rural production and therefore constitute one of the factors in the scheme of the imperialist exploitation of the Indian masses.

Besides, the handicraft producers are engaged in a losing battle—in a desperate fight. In competition with articles made with machine either imported

or indigenous their wages are driven to the wall. Such a large mass of people still cling to disrupted mode of production because no new means of earning livelihood are opened to them. On the one hand agricultural land is too much crowded to accomodate more hands and on the other the urban labour market expands very slowly owing to the retarded growth of modern industry. In the normal process of economic development capitalism expropriates the handicraft producer and transforms him into an industrial wage-earner. In India he is driven to extreme pauperisation with no perspective inside the present order of society.

Therefore any attempt in the direction of the revival of cottage industry is bound to fail as long as its products are to be sold in the competitive market. It is long since that Indian village has ceased to be "self-contained economic unit". Articles manufactured by machine find their way into the remotest village. Local handicraft wares cannot possibly hold their own in competition unless most of their production is so slow as to imply rank waste of labour employed therein. This being the case the labour power of millions, tied obligatorily to the disrupted handicraft production, in absence of other employment is wantonly wasted. Thus standard of living is reduced. Labour power that is of so much potential value is wasted, and progressive exhaustion of the social order that causes it sets in.

In view of these conditions existing in the Indian social organism M. N. Roy wrote, "The ballast of feudal

condition hindering the free development of the Indian society is an integral part of the colonial capitalism. In such conditions industrial development on the basis of the capitalist mode of production is not possible. The feudal ballast can be thrown overboard only together with colonial capitalism and then this can no longer be replaced by normal, healthy and progressive native capitalism."

Intensive exploitation of Indian masses during the World War changed the entire political atmosphere. The masses on this account were more discontented than ever before. This indeed, led to a mass awakening. Agrarian discontent coupled with a series of industrial strikes became the order of the day.

The peasantry that has to bear the major burden of the imperialist exploitation of India, has been restless. It requires immediate relief to be followed instantaneously by a radical change in the system of land ownership and methods and modes of production.

While emphasising the necessity of the development of the agrarian movement Roy wrote: "The solution of the agrarian problem is the essential condition for India becoming an industrial country. There can be no national prosperity so long as the great majority of the people remains in the state of economic bankruptcy. The entire social structure of the country must undergo a revolution. Antiquated means and modes of productions should be discarded in favour of modern ones. This depends upon the disruption of the feudal and semi-feudal

and akin forms of land-ownership which deprive the peasantry practically of their entire surplus produce. A specific mode of production cannot be discarded without disrupting the form of property with which it is related. The peasantry will be able to improve the means and modes of agricultural production only when the larger part of his surplus produce remains in his possession." ×

Signs of peasant unrest in India have been seen from time to time. The Satyagrah* movement under the Congress banner reflected the tremendous unrest prevalent among the peasant masses. It later on came to a point of an out-burst. In that situation, Roy advocated a well formulated programme based on the immediate economic demands † of the peasantry. He urged upon the Congress to adopt such a programme. It will be only in course of struggle for the enforcement of these demands that the peasant masses

× Roy advocated abolition of Zamindary as far back as 1913.

* No-Tax Campaign.

† Roy held that the peasant masses could be more easily moved into mass action on the basis of their immediate economic partial demands than on the basis of class demands. The immediate economic partial demands of the peasantry are 1. Reduction of land revenue by 50 percent; 2. Annulment of indebtedness of the poor peasants; 3. Complete exemption from rent of "uneconomic holdings"; 4 Control of usury-interests not to exceed 6 percent etc.

would realise the necessity for a radical change in the existing system of land-ownership, methods and modes of production maintained and nursed by foreign imperialism. This consciousness will in turn convince them of the liberation of India from foreign domination. As a matter of fact a successful agrarian revolution will open up vast possibilities for gigantic socio-economic changes much needed for the prosperity and progress of the great bulk of the Indian population.

Besides a new social factor with tremendous revolutionary potentialities grew up in course of the development of modern industries under the hegemony of British imperialism. This was the working class.

Commensurate with the industrial development of India during and after the World War the numerical strength of Indian workers had considerably increased. The War had brought prosperity and wealth to the Indian middle men and the owners of industries. Nevertheless it brought nothing but misery to the labouring masses. This was a result of the intensified exploitation of the masses by native and foreign capitalism.

The proportion of the entire population recorded as employed in industry, trade, transport, and mining is approximately 18 percent (of the total population of India), the number being roughly 56 millions. § The employers i. e. those making profit without contributing to the production as well as employees i.e. those performing labour

§ This figure pertains to the period under review.

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are both included in the number. Taking the liability to pay income tax as the standard the numerical strength of the capitalist class (those owning privately the means of production) is estimated to be not more than 6 millions. Those actually paying income tax (including dependents) number 1.25 millions. Those not subjected to the operation of the income tax law although having an income about a defined limit * number about 3.76 millions. Then another million can be reasonably allowed for the Native States where no income-tax is collected.

On the other hand the total number of those engaged in industrial production as wage earners can be approximately estimated at about 9 millions. †. Allowing three dependents per head of a worker, these account for about 27 millions. The remaining 23 millions * are artisans and petty traders.

The world wide depression that followed in the wake of the World War led to the sharpening of the

* Rs.2000 a year

† Large scale modern industries 3 millions; mining and quarries 0.4 millions; building 0.6 millions; plantations 0.5 millions; transport 1 million; all handicraft industries taken together 2 millions; and trade assistants, shop employees, domestic servants and general unskilled workers all totalled 1.5 millions).

* These come under the category of the petit bourgeoisie (besides peasantry middle class). Some of them are partial exploiters of labour but mostly they themselves are workers.

economic crisis throughout the world and India was no exception. The whole country was swept by gigantic industrial strikes and lock-outs. ††† The working class appeared at that moment as an independent factor × × fighting for its class demands against the employers.

Imperialism was alarmed. Britain had granted certain constitutional reforms * and economic concessions to the Indian vested interests. During the World War the nationalist bourgeoisie stood faithfully by her, for, she had promised them a "self-government" for their useful services. † But imperialism did not keep the promise. Not only was the demand for "self-government" even within the Empire rejected, the people of India were rewarded by the infamous Jalianwala

††† This was a rare phenomena in India.

× × The working class is an integral part of all the anti-imperialist forces in India. The demands for which it fought though against employers were the demands which the Congress ought to have supported and included in its programme should it then desire to mobilise the masses in a struggle against Imperialism.

* The Government of India Act 1919 (Montague-Chelmsford Reforms).

*† Britain utilized India for men, money, and materials required for the successful execution of the War. Above all Mahatma Gandhi actively helped Britain in this crisis. He was mentioned in the official despatches !

Bagh massacre of peaceful citizens at Amritsar in 1919 and Rowlat Act depriving the people of their elementary democratic rights.

Encouraged by mass awakening † throughout the country the Indian National Congress decided to boycott the reforms. § The movement took the form of 'non-violent' non-cooperation under Gandhijee's leadership but the upper strata of the Indian people indeed until then a dominating factor in the nationalist movement did not only accept the reforms, but actually joined hands with imperialism to suppress the rising revolt of the Indian masses against foreign domination. But it very soon became clear, that the then leadership of the Congress did not want to lead the revolutionary mass struggle for freedom. The Bardoli Satyagrah * (1922) was abandoned, for, the 'non-violent' non-cooperation movement had crossed the bounds of the "ethical" principle of 'non-violence.' ×

* * See page

§ The opposition appeared to come from the petit bourgeoisie which captured the Congress leadership under Gandhijee. Really speaking it did so under the pressure of mass discontent throughout the country.

* Civil Disobedience—it was on the organised strength of the discontented Bardoli peasants that Gandhijee gave the slogan of "Swaraj within six months".

× Violent revolutionary outbreaks of the peasant masses at Chauri Chaura and disturbances in various other parts of the country.

The Indian vested interests only benefitted by the abandonment of the movement. Roy then held that the Congress movement objectively was a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. It reflected the revolt of the masses of the people against colonial slavery which had in course of time become unbearable. The upper strata of the Indian people were not interested in the struggle for the complete national independence of India.

The movement however did not develop into a further stage of the national revolutionary struggle simply because it had no positive and well defined political demand *** on the one hand and on the other its programme was based on the socio-religious ideology. † *Ipsa facto* the movement badly required a

*** 'Swaraj' the political demand of the then nationalist movement—by itself was open to any interpretation. Its economic demands then represented the interests of the upper strata who were not within the Congress and actually fought against the Congress movement.

† The feature of the non-cooperation movement was that Hindus and Muslims unitedly took part in it. This was mainly due to the Congress support to the Khilafat Agitation set up by the Muslims. Unity on such religious basis cannot be a lasting one. The solid basis of such a unity is already there in the homogeneity of the political and economic demands of the Hindu and the Muslim masses.

In India there are about 80 million Muslims; 220 million Hindus; 11 million Buddhists; 3 million Shikhs; about 5 million Christians; 10 million adherents of

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well-formulated programme based on the revolutionary strivings of those † † involved in a struggle against imperialism. In spite of the revolutionary objective situation the masses remained in a state of backward political consciousness. Therefore it could not throw up an alternative revolutionary leadership advocating such a programme of complete national independence. *

Nevertheless the radical elements mostly coming from the ranks of the poor intellectuals ** (mostly working in the Congress movement) were ideologically influenced by the class struggle of the industrial workers on the one hand and by the propaganda carried on by Roy from abroad for the adoption of the programme of national democratic revolution † on the other.

Ever since 1919 it was the main concern of Roy to help the development of the working class movement on the basis of the generally accepted tribal religions; about 1 million Jains. (Figures pertain to the period under review).

† † The exploited classes form nearly 85 percent of the Indian people.

* Independence is not an end in itself but it is a means to end.

** 11 percent of the entire population of India are composed of Government employees, professionals, intellectuals (professors, teachers, students, writers), and public forces (soldiers and the policemen). The great majority of these classes—adjunct to the exploiting classes can be placed under the category of wage earners.
† See appendix II.

principle * and programme of trade unionism. He impressed upon the revolutionary elements in the working class movement that they should organise it on the basis of immediate partial economic demands†† of the workers. They must be led into a series of struggles for the enforcement of these demands. It will be only in course of their collective bargaining for the realisation of these demands that class struggle would sharpen and the class consciousness of the working class would develop. Trade Unionism would then serve the purpose of a "school for communism". Thus they would feel the necessity of their political party much needed under the objective revolutionary situation in India.

As a result of Roy's propaganda for the development of the working class movement on the above line, a conference † of the representatives of the

* The interests of the employees and the employers can never be reconciled. Class struggle is implicit in capitalist economy itself. Therefore a Trade Union is an organ of class struggle.

†† Higher wages; Eight hours working day; Better conditions for labour; Unemployment, sickness, old age and maternity insurance at the expense of the employers; etc. etc.

† This conference was convened by Shamsuddin Hasan and Gulam Hussein the latter being one of the eight persons against whom the complaint was lodged in 1924 in connection with the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy case.

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working class movement was held as far back as 1921 at Lahore, with the object of organising a political party of the Indian working class.

In a memorandum ** submitted by Roy from abroad he stated his views on this question as follows:—

“Now we must adopt a programme of action, a programme which will rally the working class in the present struggle against foreign domination and prepare them for the future struggle. But the programme of action pre-supposes the definition of the object for the realization of which the action is taken, or in other words while talking of the immediate interests of the workers and peasants we would not exclude the big issues from our programme. This tendency nevertheless is noticeable in many comrades who are eager to organise the working class into an independent political party. The first and fore-most problem that every political party in India must face and solve is the problem of national liberation. The fate of every party depends upon its ability to find a solution of these problems. To bring economic relief to the producing classes which appear to be the aim of many of our comrades present over here, cannot be a programme of a political party which fails to declare that this aim is unrealizable within the framework of imperialist domination. Therefore the mere formulation of this aim obliges us to challenge the political domination of the Indian people by a foreign power. It does

** This was an exhibit in the Cawnpore and the Meerut Conspiracy (Communist) cases.

not make any difference if this domination will be externally readjusted to the demands of the native upper classes in order to secure their services for the joint exploitation of the workers and peasants. Our party which stands for the liberation of the producing classes from all sorts of exploitation, cannot leave the question of national liberation out of its programme; because national liberation that is the release of all the forces of social production is a first step towards the ultimate realisation of our programme, which is the end of class domination. Some of the comrades, may argue, in fact this argument has already been heard that we should leave aside the question of national freedom, since it hardly concerns the working class in the present state of consciousness but will unnecessarily bring the wrath of the Government upon our party. This is a very vulgar way of looking at the situation. Firstly if it is proved that the working class fails to show any conscious interests in the question of national liberation, then more necessary does it become for our party to take up the question in the right earnest in order to show to the working class how vitally they are concerned with it. Secondly, it is idle to think that our party can escape the wrath of the Government if it is really what it is meant to be. We cannot fight for the economic interests of the producing masses without at once threatening the power and position of those classes that thrive on the unearned income; and no sooner the slightest indication of this threat is noticed than the forces of the state will begin to move with the object of crushing those from whom comes the threat. Therefore there is only one way of av-

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oiding the hostility of the Government. It is the way of reformism. If the object of our party is to alleviate the toiling classes with the aid and sanction of the suffering of the bourgeoisie then we may expect to be left unmolested. But is it worth the trouble to organise a new party with this object? Any efforts made with this object will only be gilding the chains of bondage which can be conquered only through a revolutionary struggle from the beginning to the end. This should be clearly set forth in our programme. A few ambiguous generalities will not take us very much farther than the reformist and utopian slogans of the Nationalists."

Roy also urged upon the radical elements in India to agitate for the adoption of the programme of the national democratic revolution * by the nationalist movement under the banner of the Congress so that it is transformed into a mighty anti-imperialist struggle. Already at the Ahmedabad Session of the Congress in 1921 Hazrat Mohani, a radical Congressman moved an amendment to change the objective of the Congress to Complete National Independence meaning severance of India from the British Empire. † Roy had also come in a very close touch with several members of the A. I. C. C. and important

* The programme of National Democratic Revolution in India is the minimum programme of the Revolutionary Party of the Indian working class.

† See Congress History by Dr. Pattabhi.

Congress leaders-the notable being the late Deshbandhu Chitranjan Das * under whose presidency the Gaya Congress was held in 1922. The Communist International on this occasion addressed the following Manifesto × to the Gaya session of the Congress:-

“ The infamous methods by which British imperialism sucks the life-blood of the Indian people are well-known. They cannot be condemned too strongly nor condemnation be of any practical value. British rule in India was established by force and is maintained by force. Therefore it can and will be overthrown only by a..... revolution. We are not in favour of resorting to violence if it be helped but for self-defence the Indian people must adopt a violent means, without which the foreign domination based upon violence cannot be ended. The people of India are engaged in the great revolutionary struggle. The Communist International is whole-heartedly with them. Therefore in order to declare complete freedom.

* It was Deshbandhu C. R. Das who declared that mere change of Government from the white to the brown would not mean freedom for the great bulk of the Indian people. Swaraj if any thing, was the freedom of the great bulk (90 per-cent) of the Indian people. Thereupon the Imperialist press in India accused him of Bolshevik tendencies !

× This was an exhibit in the Meerut and Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy cases in which Roy was an important figure.

from all connection with the reactionary classes—the national Congress should categorically declare that its political programme is the establishment of a democratic republic completely independent from any foreign control. Tireless and courageous agitation has to be carried on to win the masses for the cause of national liberation. The present spontaneous mass upheaval provides a very fertile field of propaganda. The necessity of developing the revolutionary consciousness of the masses demands an adoption of an economic programme in addition to the political programme of a republic to be established through a revolution.”

The personality of Gandhijee, the accredited leader of the Congress movement and his interpretation of politics in religious terms indeed quickened the political consciousness of the masses.

Nevertheless the Congress failed to adopt a programme based on the general revolutionary strivings of the masses. It remained in a vicious circle of negativism and submerged in the reactionary ideology, based on the socio-religious conception. As a result the Congress that had freed itself from constitutionalism and had tended towards mass revolutionary direct action against foreign domination, again reverted to its old position.

The collapse of the non-cooperation movement thus resulted in the rise of the Swaraj Party (1923). The no changers yet believing in mass actions failed to adopt an alternative line of activity. They lost, therefore, all political significance—except their

attachment to Gandhism. Consequently the programme of the Swaraj Party became the programme of the Congress. It was the clear result of the political passivity of the majority. The minority became the determining factor and imposed its will on the majority.

The Swaraj Party advocated Council Entry to which the Congress was opposed during the non-cooperation days. There could not be any legitimate objection to the Congress entering the councils. As a matter of fact the boycott of the legislature right from the beginning was a great mistake. Of course by itself council entry had a very little value. Nevertheless it could have been a useful form of political activity if it was undertaken as a part of the comprehensive programme of action. This is the extra-parliamentary activity.

M. N. Roy then held that the Congress could utilize council entry as a useful instrument for developing revolutionary mass struggle against foreign imperialist domination. Participation in legislative election would present opportunities for popularising the programme * of national liberation which he had presented before the Gaya Congress and to mobilise the masses in support of this programme. Consequently the political consciousness of the masses would be quickened. The plan of action suggested by him was:—

* See Appendix II.

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1. Development of a mass agitation in support of a number of concretely formulated minimum demands of the oppressed masses; 2. Organisation of the masses against the right of the British Parliament to dictate the political future of the Indian people; 3. To have the cardinal issue of self-determination raised out of the mass movement so set up; 4. To harness the mass energy created with the purpose of asserting the right of self-determination.

But the economic programme of the Swaraj Party reflected the interests of the native capitalism and it stood for the defence of the antiquated system of landlordism. 'Swaraj for 90 percent' a declaration made by the late Deshbandhu Chitranjan Das had upset the Indian vested interests.* Thereupon the Swaraj Party hastened to make it clear beyond any ambiguity that it would fight for the interests of the Indian capitalism. It also solemnised the landlords as the unshakeable pillars of society.

True to its declaration the Swaraj Party in the legislatures defended the interests of the Indian capitalism, totally disregarding the elementary welfare of the workers. Above all it did nothing for the peasant masses. In Bengal it threw out the government bill for tenancy reform which placed some restrictions on the right of the Zamindars to "over-exploit" the peasantry. In the Punjab too it defeated a private member's bill which proposed control of usury eating into the very vital of the Indian social organism.

See foot-note on page.

On this question M. N. Roy wrote that the parliamentary activities of the Swaraj Party did not bring the country any nearer to Swaraj. On the contrary the vision of Swaraj receded further and further. The national demand was progressively watered down. The Diarchy could neither be ended nor mended. Having failed to break the Councils the party itself collapsed because it undoubtedly failed to accomplish any thing whatsoever to the advantage of the movement for national liberation in which the masses were involved.

The failure of the non-violent non-cooperation movement led to dissipation of mass energy. On the other hand the actions of the Swaraj Party in the legislature which it desired to break, led to confusion in the ranks of the nationalist movement.

Had the Congress a programme of extra-parliamentary activities the youthful intellectuals who were lost to the movement could have been freed from the futile romantic terroristic activities. Thereby their services for the development of the struggle for National Independence would have been enlisted. Writing in this connection as far back as 1923 M. N. Roy declared :

“Denunciation of terrorism is correct and incorrect at the same time. It is correct politically.

Footnote of Page 128 Indian vested interests—

The Indian vested interests never stood for the national liberation of India. As a matter of fact they fought against the Congress movement.

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Spasmodic acts of violence do not lead anywhere. Revolutionary energy is only dissipated thereby. But the ethical scruples are utterly mistaken. Why condemn the ardent youths who have been driven into the blind-alley of futile terrorism by disillusionment ? They are mistaken. But they are idealists. Show them the high road of revolution instead of condemning them on moral ground. These romantic revolutionaries suspended their activities with the hope that something consoling for them would come out of the non-cooperation movement. When some of them desired to participate in the non-cooperation movement they were treated as out-casts who could be taken into the sacred fold of Gandhism only on their public penance. The collapse of the non-cooperation and the non-revolutionary nature of its leadership have thrown these young enthusiasts back upon their own resources. Instead of declaring them moral culprits, one should find in them the material which would act as the conscious vanguard of the masses. Through these youths is expressed the violent energy which will be invoked sooner or later for the political programme of the Indian nationalist movement.

“Premature violence is worse than non-violence and sporadic terrorism has as much to do with revolution as the cult of ahimsa. The latter confuses the revolutionary forces in the first stages of their development while the former is futile. In the first stage of our struggle it would be stupid to talk of violent action, but the tactical necessity of refraining from premature resort to violence does

not impose on the movement the cult of pacifism. To demonstrate the incompatibility between the doctrine of non-violence and the struggle for freedom (not spiritual but earthly) is not tantamount to preaching to premature violence or impatient terrorism. Religious beliefs and ethical conception often stand in the way of a vigorous fight and sap the energy of the militants. This has been the case with the non-cooperation movement whose revolutionary potentialities were not permitted to assert themselves. Non-violence or any other creed is not the end but the means to an end which is the freedom of the country. It is not required to be blood thirsty. One need not preach the cult of futile terrorism but it is equally useless to entertain illusions. The people of India are engaged in a revolutionary struggle. These considerations should be kept in view in order that the dynamic revolutionary forces behind Indian nationalism can be marshaled for the fight that has to be fought sooner or later. It is suicidal to incite to violence unnecessarily. It is equally detrimental to the movement to feed it upon philosophical illusions and political fallacies."

Roy's writings on all the vital questions affecting the course of development of the national liberation movement in India had greatly contributed to the proper political thinking of the nationalist revolutionaries.*

* Nationalist revolutionaries began to advocate the establishment of the Federated Republic of the United States of India by an organised armed revolution. Later on many of them were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and death.

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Moreover the disillusioned elements in the ranks of the Congress movement found in them (in his writings) a revolutionary alternative to the socio-religious ideology advocated by Gandhijee.

Armed with a new revolutionary philosophy† of life

† Socialism (that is to say Communism) is not equilitarianism. It does not seek to level down humanity to a uniform standard. Socialism will establish equality only in respect of opportunity. In the Socialist society, every man and woman will have equal opportunity to attain the highest level of creativeness and intellectual progress. Artificially created inequalities will be removed.....Socialism is more than an economic theory. The plan of revolutionary political action on the part of the working class is not the whole of socialism. Socialism is not comprehensively defined by calling it an ideology of social reconstruction. Socialism is a revolutionary philosophy of life. The economic theories formulated by Karl Marx cannot be properly understood except in the light of his philosophical teachings. The political program of socialism cannot be effectively acted upon unless the leaders of that action are inspired by the revolutionary philosophy of life which constitutes the foundation of Marxism.

Socialism is the philosophy of the working class. But the working class as a whole cannot be expected to attain that high level of intellectual development which is the pre-requisite for the understanding of a philosophy. The working class takes up the fight for socialism not in consequence of the intellectual convic-

propounded by Roy the radical elements along with those youthful Indians (Muslims)† who had returned from Moscow had begun taking active part in the organisation of the industrial workers. The readiness of the workers to fight for their immediate partial economic demands coupled with the success of the revolution in Russia had greatly encouraged them.

Until after the end of the World War a strike or a trade union organisation of the industrial workers was indeed a rare phenomenon. But the World War had ended only aggravating the economic crisis all the world over. The mass economic discontent had reached a bursting point. Consequently strikes* and lock-outs

tion, but as a matter of necessity realised through experience. But there is a different road to socialism to be travelled by those who do not share directly the experience of the working class. That is the road to intelligence which must be travelled by the great majority of those who call themselves Socialists.—M. N. Roy.

† See Chapter XI

* 1919: Workers employed in the Textile and Railway industries were organised in their unions.

Important among the strikes that took place during the year were of textile workers (15,000) in Cawnpore (U. P.) and of the employees of the Postal Department in Calcutta.

1920: Among the important strikes (200) that took place were of textile workers in Ahmedabad

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became the order of the day. Trade union organisations sprang up throughout the country. Of course these then had no clearly defined objective and a well formulated programme.

For the first time the young Indian proletariat had begun playing its role in the scheme of the radicalisation of the movement for national freedom developing under the Congress banner. Never-the-less it was ideologically backward enough to play a decisive role for throwing it to a higher form of struggle.

and Bombay; workers employed by the Tata Iron and Steel Company Jamshedpur; employees of the North Western Rly. and the Postal employees in Bombay. The All India Trade Union Congress was founded.

1921: There were 400 strikes during the year involving 600,000 workers. Important among them were: The Assam Tea Garden strike—resulting in sympathetic strikes on the Assam Bengal Rly. and the Inland River Steamers. There were 11,000 workers involved and it lasted over two months. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills strike involved 10,000 workers.

1922: There were 272 strikes involving 450,000 workers, important among them being on the E. I. Rly. which began in (U.P.) Feb. 1922 spreading rapidly to Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the Punjab. In it were involved nearly 25,000 men. It ended in April 1922. Another big strike in the Tata Iron and Steel Co. at Jamshedpur, involved 23,000.

Alarmed with the critical situation * at home and abroad imperialism decided to suppress the movement for national freedom ** and nascent working class organisations.

1923: There were 209 strikes involving 300,000 workers, the important being a strike of 48,000 textile workers in Ahmedabad.

1924: There were 133 strikes involving 350,000 workers, the important being the strike of the Bombay textile workers numbering 160,000 men against the decision of the mill-owners not to pay the bonus to the workers. The strike collapsed following the report of the enquiry Committee (in March 1924). In this very year Mr. N. M. Joshi brought a Bill for Maternity Benefit and Mr. Chamanlal brought his Bill for weekly payment of wages (both these liberal labour leaders were office-bearers of the A. I. T. U. C. which had already put forth these and many other demands and agitated for their enforcement) but the Legislative Assembly then refused to commit itself even to the principles of the Bills !

* By the appearance of new rivals (Japan and United States of America) in the competitive world market England's monopoly of the world market was severely undermined leading to a sharp economic crisis at home.

** Gandhijee was sentenced to six years and

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It began by arresting a number of pioneer organisers of the working class movement and rank and file members of the Congress in 1924.

Charged under Sec. 121 A I. P. C. i. e. "conspiring with" M. N. Roy in Moscow "to overthrow the sovereignty of the King-Emperor over British India by means of an organised violent revolution" Dange, Usmani, Muzzafer Ahmed, Gupta and others stood their trial at Cawnpore (U. P.) Court. As a result of the trial some of them were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonments. The main evidence produced in this case was documentary (i. e. letters, books, pamphlets, and numerous writings of M. N. Roy) material coupled with the activities of the accused in the labour movement !

While rejecting the appeal filed on behalf of the convicted men, the Allahabad High Court stated as follows:—

"Absurd and unbelievable as their aspirations were (1),

during the non-cooperation movement imperialism used all the instruments of oppression and did not even abstain from resorting to shooting down of peaceful demonstrators and agitated peasantry (Malbar and other places). Many Indians—sympathisers, supporters and rank and file members of the Congress were arrested under Martial Law and convicted for long terms of imprisonment ranging from a year to transportation for life.

the fact remains that each of these men entered into and carried on this conspiracy with each other and with Roy in the most serious spirit. Whilst the conspiracy had for its principal object the overthrow of British rule in the country; the conspirators looked even beyond this. The pamphlet "What Do We Want ?" and many other documents set out clearly what they aimed at achieving and how they hoped to achieve it.....A People's Party was to be the initial step...Within that apparently harmless body illegal activities were to be pursued by an inner party consisting of all the revolutionary nationalists."

Nevertheless after seven years from the date of conviction of the accused in the above case, the Royal Commission on Labour (appointed in 1929) made a significant discovery to the effect that "the great out-break of the strike after the War had been due to the obvious economic causes: a rise in wage level was overdue and workers awoke to the disabilities from which they suffered in respect of long hours and other matter." Was this a belated discovery ?

Critical analysis and exhaustive review of the colonial exploitation of India must lay bare the fact that no extrenuous elements can be found responsible for the growing mass economic discontent-both among the urban and rural masses but imperialism itself, does not matter whatever may be the form and methods of colonial exploitation adopted by it from time to time.

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Reviewing the period under examination M. N. Roy wrote:

“The internal contradiction of colonial economy comes into gross evidence in the blind faith with which the Indian bourgeoisie is clinging to the doctrine of protection. Under the given conditions protection will do more harm than good to Indian capitalism itself. The purchasing power of the Indian masses is so limited and would compel them to go without even the most minimum necessities of life if the prices rise. And the first effect of protection will be to force prices high. The Indian bourgeoisie cannot see further than the tip of their nose because by their very growth as a partner in the system of colonial exploitation they are precluded from seeking salvation.

“ The War waged to further imperialist ambitions has accentuated the contradiction of colonial economy. It has seriously dislocated the entire system of colonial exploitation. Already before the War the pauperization of the Indian masses was so far advanced as presaged a severe crisis of colonial economy. The process was expedited by the extra-ordinary burden imposed upon the Indian masses for contributing to the expenses of the War. Cosequently as soon as the short post war boom was over the bankruptcy of the Indian customer becomes evident. India's obligations to England are discharged year by year through surplus export over import. The surplus suddenly disappeared. Worse still there was a heavy adverse balance. After two years of feverish efforts the

balance was reestablished by artificially reducing imports. So just at the moment British industries need greater market. It contracted even in the monopoly sphere. Insistence upon collecting...(proceeds of colonial exploitation—author) was directly antagonistic to the interests of the home industries. „That (proceeds of colonial exploitation—author) was collected just the same. The imperialist structure revealed itself in a top heavy condition. Its collapse is inevitable.

“ Naturally imperialism does not face the fatal situation with folded arms. It looks frantically for a possible way out. One is found in the plan of rationalizing colonial exploitation so to say. The tendency in this direction was noticeable already in the beginning of the War. Far-seeing imperialist recognised the necessity of changing the old policy and recommended that new methods of exploitation should be adopted to meet the new situation (Lord Hardinge's Memorial to the Home Government 1915). In 1916 an Industrial Commission was appointed “to examine and report upon the possibilities of further industrial development.” After two years' investigation the Commission reported:— ‘It is vital for the government to secure the establishment in India of those industries whose absence exposes us to grave danger in the event of war.’

“ The War had ruined a number of European countries economically. Their purchasing power had sunk to the vanishing point. On the other hand while English industries were mobilised for the protection of war materials and British ships occupied in military trans-

port, the U. S. A. and Japan had established themselves in the world market as exporters of manufactured goods. After the War, new rivals appeared on the scene. Through inflation of currency the cost of industrial production was greatly lowered in Germany and Belgium. Consequently Britain was faced with severe trade depression. Owing to the contractions of the world market on the whole and reduction of her share in it, Britain found herself in deep industrial crisis. She must now fall back upon her colonial reserve. The purchasing power of India for example increased, there would be market for the produce of British industries. But that is to say the form of colonial exploitation did not permit any intrinsic expansion of the Indian market. For, it obstructed the development of forces of production. Therefore it could no longer be continued. The purchasing capacity of India could not increase unless she was allowed to produce more with which to pay more for her purchases. Under the pressure of all these facts, to promote the industrial development of India became the policy of imperialism. Traditional policy of imposing the doctrine of free trade upon the backward agricultural India was replaced by that "discriminating protection". The change of policy forced by changed conditions marked a definite turn in the history of imperialism.

"The forms and methods of colonial exploitation in the period of capitalist decline cannot be identical with those in the previous epoch of capitalist expansion. But presently a new difficulty was encountered. Industrialisation of India would create market for the

British metal and engineering industries. Development of productive forces would raise the purchasing power of India. Direct exploitation of the Indian labour would mean production of large surplus value. Granting the Indian bourgeoisie their share, imperialism would derive greater profit. Owing to the superfluity and extreme cheapness of labour, capital would accumulate in India at a larger rate. All these calculations were however upset by the inability of Britain to supply the capital to promote the industrialisation of India at such a rapid tempo (speed), as would give relief to the home industries before it was too late. Industrial depression had seriously affected the accumulation of capital in Britain. It was calculated by competent authorities that by 1924 it was about thirty percent lower than before the War. On the other hand the home requirements for new capital had tremendously increased. Before the War something like 30 percent of the yearly accumulation satisfied the home requirements leaving a huge exportable surplus. After the War the ratio was just the reverse. Less than thirty (30) percent of the greatly reduced yearly accumulation could be exported. Remainder was necessary to re-equip the home industries; so that they could compete with the highly developed mode of production in other countries. As a matter of fact at a time (1925-26) balance of internal payment (on mercantile account) definitely turned against Britain. The crisis had become positively alarming. It severely shook the whole imperial structure. Desperate measures were taken to meet the situ-

ation. For a time embargo was placed upon the export of capital.

"England's inability to export capital frustrated the scheme of repairing her position by promoting industrial development of India. Big ventures projected in 1920-22 were suspended. In 1923 the flow of capital from England to India completely stopped.....Nevertheless it began tackling the problem from another side. A very considerable amount is accumulated in possession of Indian upper classes (on the basis of the precious metal imported during the last half a century) the old method of colonial exploitation did not permit vast wealth to be employed productively. Therefore imperialism launched upon the policy of harnessing the accumulated wealth of India, to be employed as fluid capital. This cannot be done except through the introduction of a stable currency of Gold Standard.* Hence the project of the Reserve Bank. But here again British imperialism was beaten in the first round. On the one hand it was not in a position to provide gold for the purpose. And the Federal Reserve Bank of America which at that time held the largest share of the world's gold would not help British imperialism out of the crisis. On the other hand Indian bourgeoisie demanded such a large control over the proposed bank of issue as would threaten the supremacy of imperial finance. The fluidity of the Indian wealth in productive capital could assist the scheme of rationalising of colonial explo-

* Refer to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Indian Currency—Author.

itation provided that the process would take place under the hegemony of British finance. Otherwise it might sweep away the whole system of Colonial economy of India. Therefore imperialism has to proceed very cautiously. So it suspended the scheme of the Reserve Bank with the object of manoeuvring itself in a position of vantage.

“Meanwhile things went from bad to worse. The productivity of India stagnated. Finding nearly insuperable difficulties in the way of industrialising India under the supremacy of British Finance attention was concentrated upon the possibilities of increasing agricultural production. A Royal Commission * was set up to explore the field. But it was not given the power to suggest any change in semi-feudal pre-capitalist relationship of property in land which is the basic obstacle to any substantial increase of agricultural production. On the other hand industrial backwardness and disruption of handicraft have caused heavy overcrowding of land. Consequently peasants’ holdings have become so small as does not permit the introduction of any modern machinery.

“Further the fact that practically the entire surplus produce is taken away from him in the form of rents, taxes (indirect and direct), feudal levies and usurious interest, makes the peasant entirely unable to improve the means of cultivating the soil. Under these conditions of uneconomic land holding and progres-

* The Royal Commission of Agriculture was appointed in January 1926.

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ssive pauperisation of the peasant masses, the project of rationalising agricultural production cannot be carried out. The recommendations of the Agricultural Commission have therefore remained on paper. Replacement of commonly used primitive wooden plough by the modern steel instrument, and the introduction of other improved agricultural implements would on the one hand, open up extensive market for the British iron and steel industries, and on the other hand increase the total volume of agricultural produce. This in its turn would raise the purchasing power of India thereby contributing to the British trade. But this cannot happen unless the peasants are in a position to buy modern implements. **Any substantial increase of agricultural production is therefore conditional upon the peasantry being relieved considerably of the burden that to day grinds them down to the state of progressive pauperisation. This condition can be created by, on the one hand, encroaching upon the.....(proceeds of colonial exploitation-author) and on the other hand by depriving the parasitic landlords of the unearned income. In addition there are the money-lenders and monopolist traders who also must be stamped out. In short the entire system of colonial exploitation must go before any improvement can take place in the agricultural productivity of India. As imperialism cannot commit suicide with the hope of resurrecting into a new life it is not able to extricate itself from the crisis of its own creation."**

The crisis created by imperialist exploitation of

India was daily sharpening. It was fast developing into a revolutionary situation.

Poor intellectuals together with the workers, peasants, artisans and petty traders en masse were faced with hopeless economic bankruptcy.

The mass economic discontent was daily growing among the industrial proletariat. It indeed expressed itself, time and again, into gigantic strikes* against the offensive of foreign and native capitalism.

* 1925: The sixth Session of the Trade Union Congress met at Cawnpore.

There were some 133 strikes involving 270,000 workers.

1926: There were 127 strikes involving 187,000 workers mostly in Bombay and Bengal Presidencies. Out of these there were 57 strikes in the Textile industry and 33 in the Jute industry. In the former there were involved nearly 22,713 while in the latter 129,951 men—the causes being wage disputes, unjust dismissals, and disagreement on leave etc.

It is necessary here to note that on 8th Sep. some 37 members of the Legislative Assembly (mostly Congressmen) issued the following appeal: "We the undersigned members of the Legislative Assembly having regard to the critical situation which has arisen in Bombay by reason of reduction of wages of

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This factor, that is to say the working class struggle for immediate redress of their griev-

the mill-hands and in view of public demonstration of protest by thousands of workers in Bombay urge upon the employers to make immediate arrangements for a conference to bring about a satisfactory settlement. **We offer our mediation in order to avert disastrous consequences.**" But the mill-owners did not care for this appeal.

Sometime in the middle of Sep. 1926 the long apprehended strike broke out and spread very rapidly. About 40,000 men were involved. All the mills with an exception of one or two closed down. Nevertheless it came to an end in the beginning of Dec. 1926, as the demand for the restoration of wage level was given by the mill owners who in turn obtained **pervious to the settlement of the strike their demand for the suspension of cotton excise duty.** The following gist of an interview between a member of the Governor General's council Sir B. N. Mitra and the President of the Ahmedabad Mill Owners' Association exposes indeed the primitive mentality of the Indian industrialists. The President of the Association said that though the Government of India had in recent years passed a number of measures intended for the benefit of the working class, **there were obvious limits to the pace at which they should proceed in such legislation.** Conditions in India differ so widely from those in Western countries that

ances and the enforcement of their trade union demands (class demands) led to greater and greater

legislation in advance of the times was likely to do more harm than good. For this reason his association did not approve of the policy adopted by the Government of India in giving effect to the various decisions of the International Labour Conference.

Let it be noted that there was no love lost between the labouring masses and British imperialism. The legislative enactments were the Factory Acts (1888, 1891, 1911, 1922), The Mines Acts (1901, 1923), The Workmen's Compensation Act (1923,1928) and the Trade Union Act of 1926. These Legislative enactments were the result of agitation carried on on behalf of the discontented Indian workers. Nevertheless these acts hardly changed their economic condition which was daily going from bad to worse.

The Labour Directory compiled, towards the end of 1925, by Mr. R. R. Bakhle, Asst. Secretary of A. I. T. U. C. showed 8 Federations and 167 Trade Unions in India. The A. I. T. U. C. claimed nearly 100,000 members.

1927: 129 strikes involving 132,000 workers took place. Of these 26 strikes were in the Cotton and Textile industries in Bombay involving 36,000 men, and 3 strikes on the Railways involving 32,114. The most important of the strike of the Rly.

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degree of radicalisation of the forces making for the

workers was on the B. N. R. (Kharagpur workshop).

1928: There were 200 strikes involving 507,000 workers. Of these the general strike in the textile industry of Bombay involved 125,000 and lasted from 26th of April to 6th October 1928. A strike Committee composed of the representatives of the Workers and Peasants Party (newly organised in 1927), the Bombay Mill Workers' Union and the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal was formed. The representatives of the textile Labour Union had a Committee of their own. Later on a joint-Strike committee composed of the strikers and textile workers' unions (both moderate and others) was formed to present a united front to the owners. Finally a settlement was reached and the workers resumed work in October 1928. A large number of workers just after the strike had left for their villages and only half the number of workers was able to resume work. It was only in November that the mills could run once again. There were "disturbances" and the police as usual resorted to firing-injuring and killing some workers. There was also a sympathetic strike in cotton industry at Sholapur and strikes in the Tata Iron and Steel Co., Jute mills and E. I. Railway.

Let it be noted, the Girni Kamgar Union had more than 70,000 members and it was under the leadership of the Communists.

national liberation of the Indian people. Those 'de-classed' intellectuals who were arrested and sentenced in 1924 for their active and leading part in the working class movement, were indeed, substituted by newly crystallised radical elements accepting the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat.

In course of time these members of the revolutionary working class movement acquired considerable influence over the working class, the youthful Congressmen and other oppressed and exploited classes. Greater and greater interest was evinced by them in the programme, tactics and methods of the struggle for national freedom advocated by Roy and his followers in India.

Under the pressure of the discontented masses and as a result of the relentless efforts made ever since 1921 by radical elements in the Congress, it declared, in spite of stubborn opposition from the right, its objective as "complete national independence" * in 1927 at its Madras session. Nevertheless it did not adopt a programme compatible with its declared objective—thus leaving it open to any interpretation of it. * *

The chief task of the Indian National liberation movement has been the realisation of the freedom of the peasantry from direct and indirect exploitation. Without its liberation, India cannot travel in the van

*Pandit Jawaharlal was the mover of this resolution.

* * The Nehru Report and the Resolution of the Calcutta Session of the Congress in 1928.

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of modern civilization and above all the goal of social revolution would ever remain a distant ideal.

Time and again Roy as the pioneer of the working class movement had placed before the nationalist movement a well formulated programme of an agrarian revolution† which is but a major part of the entire programme of national democratic revolution.

During the big industrial strikes and lock-outs that took place, one important characteristic of the working class movement was that—relegated to a street corner, harassed by the money-lender and facing starvation—the worker went back to his village. * * *

On reaching he found the land overcrowded leaving him no chance to earn his barest means of subsistence. He only became an additional burden on the already scanty and meagre resources of his peasant relatives !

† See pages 113, 114, 144

* * * Besides Madras, Bombay and Calcutta there are hardly eight cities with more than a quarter of a million inhabitants throughout the length and breadth of India. Cities with a population of 100,000 and upwards number only 30. There are about 2,200 towns with population between 5000 and 100,000; whilst the number of villages is not far shorter than a three quarter of a million. It is in these vast villages—some of them almost of the dimension of a small market town and others tiny hamlets of half a dozen huts—that the great majority of the people of India lives. Figures pertain to the period under review.

Nevertheless time and again he had defended his right to struggle for the realisation of the redress of his greivances and the enforcement of these immediate economic demands (trade union demands). He was trained in the technique of the struggle. Inspite of his backward class consciousness, but freed from the reactionary influence of socio-religious ideology advocated by the Gandhian leadership of the Congress he was best fitted to act as the lever for the development of a mass agrarian movement based on the revolutionary strivings of the peasant masses.

Roy had then advised those then associated with the revolutionary left-wing of the working class, to arm the workers going back to their villages with such a comprehensive programme and plan of action for the mobilisation of peasant masses in a struggle for national liberation.

As we have seen in the previous pages signs of peasant unrest were visible ever since 1919. Since then the pauperisation of the peasantry has been progressively increasing.* Their purchasing capacity had been lowered down year after year. In the coming years these conditions were to become the basis of a mass movement in India.

*"The use of machinery in farming operation is kept down (by whom ? -author) to the very minimum; and power required is supplied by the work of men and animals and the latter frequently are under fed, undersized and all but useless. There is an enormous waste of human time and labour caused by this lack of all but the most primitive and indispensable (?) agricultural imple-

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The coming crisis was pregnant with a maturing revolutionary situation. Imperialism was franti-
ments; a waste which reacts in many more ways than these which are immediately obvious. Again India supports large number of diseased and useless cattle which may not be slaughtered, or otherwise dealt with because of religious objections (?) and yet the annual cost to India of supplementing this vast multitude be enormous.

"The life of average Indian agriculturists tends to revolve in a vicious circle. After generations of arrested progress, he has frequently lost even the desire for improvement and in any case his poverty makes it impossible for him to grapple with his circumstances."
—India in 1926-1927.

What a shedding of crocodile tears! Let it be noted—these are conditions created by imperialism itself. Never-the-less it tries to show ignorance about this fact. It is pleading not-guilty—author.

Famine owing to drought, or scanty or too abundant rainfall indeed causes acute distress amongst the peasant masses. During 1926 an acute state of famine prevailed in Merwara and in the early part of 1927 in the whole district of Yeotmal in C. P., Baluchistan, N. W. Frontier Province, in various parts of C. P. and Bombay and Madras presidencies. Moreover fodder for cattle also will fail in the dry season and "since his cattle are the corner-stone of his wealth and welfare," the peasant faces only his ruin. Pestilence, and insecurity from the oppression of the money-lenders and petty

cally trying to deal with it. × It could only do so officials add to his miseries. Time and again floods on account of excessive rain have played havoc and destroyed human life, and cattle and swept away peasants' dwellings.

The custodian of modern civilisation i. e. British imperialism possessing all the scientific means of the conquest of nature- simply reserves them for the exploitation of mankind. The Indian peasant masses are left at the mercy of nature itself.—author.

During 1928 there were mass peasant movements in Burma and the Bombay presidency.

The basis of the movement in Burma and Bombay presidency was indeed the miserable condition of the peasant masses. But the immediate cause in the case of the latter was increase in assessment in the Bardoli Taluka having a population of 88,000. The peasants refused to pay the taxes unless an enquiry was granted into the question of unjustified increased assessment. The movement assumed greater and greater proportions. It drew the attention of the whole country and evoked sympathy in support of their demands. The Bombay Government finally gave in and agreed to appoint an Enquiry Committee-the result of which did not bring any material benefit to the peasantry of Bardoli.

Similarly in Burma a no-tax campaign was launched in the districts of Prome, Insien and Tharraddy.

× From 1916 onward the British Government appo-

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through an alliance with the Indian bourgeoisie *. This was indeed to be on the basis of some political and economic concessions to be granted to the latter by the former. Imperialism made a definite gesture in this direction by announcing the appointment of the Royal Commission on Reform (otherwise known as the Simon Commission).

Curiously enough, it did not include therein a single Indian—not even the representative of the Indian vested interests. It was therefore boycotted by all schools of political thoughts. ** The entire nationalist bourgeoisie was involved in an opposition to imperialist absolutism. Of course the reactionaries headed by the communalists *** and the Johukamwalas had no

intended a number of Royal Commissions (Industrial, Fiscal, Currency, Agricultural and the Banking Enquiry Committee) to find out new modes and methods of exploitation of India.

* The representatives of the Indian upper strata had time and again from the floor of the Central Legislatures asked for a Commission on Reform—of course on 'equal terms'.

** The Liberals headed by Sapru opposed the Commission because it did not include any Indian. Another liberal leader Sir Chimanlal Setalvad declared that the liberals would consider any such project in the future on 'equal terms' with the British representatives.

*** "Divide and rule" has been the policy of

other alternative but to co-operate with it.

The Indian National Congress while declaring its determination to boycott the Simon Commission stated that it did so because the Commission was appointed in utter disregard to the right of the Indian people to self-determination.

Under its banner a huge mass agitation was set up throughout the country. The Commission was opposed every where. Mass meetings, processions and demonstrations became the order of the day. Nevertheless the agitation remained in the vicious circle of negation only to collapse without throwing the movement to a higher stage of struggle against imperialism.

As against the self-arrogated right of the British Parliament to dictate to the Indian imperialism all along its domination over India and especially during the post war period. On the other hand the leadership of the nationalist movement then ridden with socio-religious ideology could not dislodge the communalists from the position of vantage. The masses—does not matter to whatever religious faith they belong—if organised on the basis of their immediate economic demands could be very easily mobilised under the banner of the nationalist movement. Of course the minority question has to be solved in the sense that if guarantees required for the protection of the minority must be given thus taking away the very weapon from the hands of the communalists with which they use the masses for their personal benefit.

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people the form of political state, Roy advocated the slogan of the Constituent Assembly to be elected by universal suffrage—as the only democratic authority having the right to frame the future constitution of free India.

Nevertheless the agitation for the boycott of the Simon Commission collapsed dissipating mass popular energy created in course of this agitation. For, the Congress leadership dominated by the influence of the bourgeoisie did not place before the country a positive slogan to give a practical shape to the right of the Indian people to self-determination.

Agitation for the boycott of the Simon Commission if supplemented with that of the election of the Constituent Assembly could have indeed mobilised the masses in defence of their right to freedom from imperialist domination. This was an opportunity well afforded, if properly utilised, for broadening the political outlook of the masses. The political conception of the masses has been monarchist. It could only be democratic in course of struggle for real democratic freedom.

The leadership of the objectively revolutionary movement was reactionary. It could not see further than the tip of its nose. It was guided by socio-religious ideology. In spite of the situation with tremendous revolutionary potentialities, the struggle could not develop to a higher stage, for, the Congress had no programme based on the revolutionary strivings of the masses of the people. Such a programme was

indeed necessary for developing the movement from the stage of agitation to that of organisation. The masses cannot be organised except on the basis of their immediate revolutionary strivings.

Of course, the Communists-the vanguard of the national democratic revolution had placed such a programme before the movement.

This was the programme of national independence based on the immediate economic and political strivings of the masses of the people. Along with the radical left-wing elements, they had agitated for years for its acceptance by the Congress movement. But the acceptance of such a programme is conditional upon the rise of an alternative revolutionary leadership, which in turn can only come into being as a result of the radicalisation of the rank and file of the movement. This radicalisation could not take place except in course of the struggle for the enforcement of the partial, immediate and economic demands of the masses of the people.

Indeed, there were radical left wing elements†† thrown up in course of the struggle for national freedom. Nevertheless there was no left wing of the Congress as such. It was in the process of development.

Guided by the tactical line laid down by the World Congresses of the Communist International from time to time, the Communists† in India had played

†† "Independence of India League"

† "While in India as a member of the Trade-

an important role in the process of radicalisation of the forces making for the liberation of India from colonial slavery. In course of their actual participation of course from the stand point of the working class-in the objectively revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle taking place under the Congress banner, they had been able to establish organic contact with the masses of the people. Indeed it was under their leadership that the working class heroically fought a series of struggles for the redress of their grievances and achievement of their trade union demands.

Nevertheless there were only a few communists scattered all over the country. These could be said to form a basic nucleus of the political party of the proletariat (The Communist Party) in a process of its development. Its ideological foundation* was indeed laid down already by M. N. Roy just after the foundation

Union Delegation, I happened to meet the Indian Communists who were actively working in the Indian working class movement. Of course they are few in number but they are determined and energetic. In conversation that I had with many of them I gathered that they were staunch followers of that famous Indian Communist exile M. N. Roy. They regard him as their guide, philosopher and comrade." These are comments of Herr Fuertwaengler, the then Secretary of German Federation of Trade Unions in his book on Indian working class. (Gewaerktaetige Indien).

* Roy is the author of the programme of the Communist Party of India.

of the Communist International.

It is erroneous to believe that there existed a cohesive disciplined and functioning Communist Party in India. Of course the existence of such a Party would have helped the quickening of the process of class differentiation—the proletariat would have been able to counter-act the capitulatory politics of the bourgeoisie and played a decisive role in the development of the national liberation movement—thus opening a way towards the great Social revolution.

While pointing out the importance of the role of the working class in the scheme of the national democratic revolution, M. N. Roy opined as follows:-

“Under the given conditions (in India) the working class is the only class that can solve all the problems of national revolution. The basic problems of all problems, the agrarian question cannot be tackled by the bourgeoisie. They are against an agrarian revolution, because in India the agrarian problem cannot be solved within the limits of capitalism.

“The petty bourgeoisie- particularly the poor intellectuals are an important factor in the national revolution. They are economically bankrupt. They generally desire freedom from imperialist domination. They are dissatisfied with the compromising and capitulatory politics of the big bourgeoisie.

“Still they are unable to liberate themselves from the reactionary social outlook. Religion, spiritualism and Gandhism have a strong hold upon them. Therefore

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except under the influence of the working class, they will not be able to carry on the revolutionary struggle against imperialism.....

“Thus the relation of class forces places the working class on the forefront of the entire national revolutionary army demanding the overthrow of imperialism; establishment of a revolutionary democratic state... revolutionary mobilisation of the petty bourgeois masses and thorough accomplishment of the agrarian revolution.

“Normal economic development of the country not being possible under the given political and social conditions, the struggle of the working class with the most minimum demands directly develops into a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the entire colonial exploitation. This is how the working class still organised weakly becomes the driving force in the anti-imperialist struggle. In course of the struggle it will acquire political education and develop a leading cadre clearly equipped to discharge the historic mission.”

The much needed revolutionary party of the young Indian proletariat could not be simply organised upon the desire of an individual or a group of individuals—does not matter how sincere this desire might be. How could it be possible to jump over the whole period of class differentiation (taking place in the national revolutionary movement) necessary for the growth of such a party ?

Neither M. N. Roy nor Joseph Stalin could be

held responsible for the absence of a functioning C. P. in India. The root cause indeed lay in the general backwardness of India—industrial and cultural. The young Indian proletariat was in a state of backward class consciousness. Of course they did fight many a valiant battle under the leadership of the Communists. Nevertheless they did so for the enforcement of their partial immediate economic demands and not for the immediate realisation of the programme of social revolution. Numerically small, ideologically backward and organisationally weak, it would be nothing short of a misadventure to attempt to organise them immediately on the basis of the maximum programme of their class.

The C. P. of India could only be built up as a mass party as a result of the active participation of the working class in the national liberation struggle. This has been indeed taking place under the banner of the Congress. The Congress as a movement is objectively revolutionary. Should the Congress be transformed into an organ of anti-imperialist struggle, it could be so done only by the active participation of the working class in the movement for national liberation under its banner.

It would be only in course of the struggle that disillusioned elements could be crystalised making for the revolutionary party of the working class—required by the exigencies of the situation in India.

Until the meeting of the plenary session of the Sixth

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World Congress of the Communist International, the Indian Communists followed this correct Marxist-Leninist tactical line laid down by the previous World Congresses of the International.

CHAPTER XVII

Sixth World Congress (contd.)

For the major part of the year 1928, during the summer of which the Sixth World Congress was held, Roy was not present in Moscow. He was ill and away in Germany*. He was not able to recover from illness by that time. His ear-trouble continued and therefore it necessitated another operation. Thanks to the skill and sympathy of a well known German specialist, Prof. Kobrack, Roy was successfully operated upon for the second time.

Taking advantage of Roy's unavoidable absence, while he was in China and confined to bed in a private nursing home in Germany a number of intrigues were hatched up against him by certain persons claiming to be ultra-communists aided and abetted by imperialist agents. In course of time they grew rampant and manifested in all their ugliness. Indeed, these intriguers had a full repast during his absence from Moscow.

*See page 105

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They were none other than certain Indian adventurers. Having arrived in Moscow much earlier than the meeting of the Sixth World Congress they set themselves to the task of preparing evidence of Roy's "guilt." While reporting on the Indian situation** they stated, "there existed in India a revolutionary situation, pregnant with immediate possibilities of a proletarian revolution; the Communists were in the full control of this situation. But M. N. Roy was an obstacle in the way of the expectant revolution." The slogan of these 'accredited representatives' of the Indian revolution was, "Remove Roy and the road to revolution is clear".

Unfortunately Roy could not be present at this Congress to challenge these contentions of the Indian adventurers, some of whom were later on proved to be connected with the Scotland Yard. Had he been well, he would have surely faced them, exposed them in their true colour and vindicated his point of view before the representatives of the International Communist movement.

Fascinated by the report about the immediate prospect of a revolution in India, Roy's point of view was criticised. He was accused by Com. Kusinen, of advocating "a theory" that "British imperialism would

** The "learned" Indian adventurers while reporting on the Indian situation used all material from Roy's writings—notably from "India-in-Transition" and made their own conclusion !

decolonise India!" Com. Kusinen simply went hysteric and described Roy as the "lackey of imperialism and an ally of the Indian bourgeoisie." Indeed it was ridiculous to charge him so maliciously as that. For, he had never advocated such a reactionary theory†.

The atmosphere of defeatism brought about by the failure of the revolution in China* coupled with fascinating report on India, the Sixth World Congress of the International rejected Roy's point of view which had been for years the view of the Communist International. As opposed to the Marxist-Leninist tactical line for the colonial countries, a new line was prescribed for the Communists in the colonial countries such as China and India.

The Indian Communists were called upon by this new tactical line to leave the Congress; to condemn it as a party of the Indian bourgeoisie and the Congress movement as counter-revolutionary. As opposed to the Congress, the Communists were expected to build up an independent anti-imperialist organisation; to withdraw from the trade unions which were under the leadership of the reformists, to organise Red trade unions under the direct leadership of the Communists.

The Communists in China were asked to give the slogan of the 'Soviet' and to organise "Armed insurrections". This slogan indeed was not compatible with the realities of the situation in China. §

† See Chapter XVI

* See pages 95-102

§ See pages 104-105

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Until the Sixth World Congress the tactical line of the International in the industrial countries of the world, was determined by the realities of the situation that is to say by the long perspective of revolution in these countries and the course of socio-economic development in Russia.

The success of the revolution in Russia had created hopes for revolutions in a number of leading European countries which had been ruined by the World War. There the already existing economic crisis had been aggravated.

“In the beginning the expectation of revolution in Western Europe appeared to be on the point of being fulfilled. The next year saw the downfall of German monarchy. The Austrian Empire disintegrated in consequence of severe military defeat. There was a revolution in Hungary.

“But in none of these countries the situation was favourable for the triumph of the revolution. In Germany the revolution failed to go beyond the establishment of parliamentary democratic state. Upon the downfall of the monarchy the bourgeoisie with the aid of the army could take the possession of the state machinery and prevent its complete break-down.....

“The treaty of Brest-Litowsk had given the time to the revolutionary Soviet Government to organise and entrench itself for beating down the counter-revolutionary resistance.

“In Germany the termination of the War meant an

accession of strength for the counter-revolution which was reinforced by the army released from the military scene on the fronts. As a matter of fact the treaty of Brest-Litowsk which was so very helpful for the triumph of Soviet Russia proved harmful to the revolution in Germany. But this was a secondary cause. The real cause being the existence of a powerful bourgeoisie which, thanks to the co-operation of Social Democratic Party and the conservativeness of fairly well-to-do peasant proprietors could reorganise the partially dislocated state machinery, and set going ruthlessly against the revolution.....

“The Social Democratic Party could not have betrayed the revolution if the majority of the organised workers following its leadership were determined to go ahead. They rejected Proletarian Dictatorship in favour of parliamentary democracy. That is a lesson of history which revolutionaries should not forget.

“Objective condition for the establishment of proletarian dictatorship as visualised by Marx as a contingency of the transition period existed in Germany more acutely than in any other country. Nor can we attribute the failure to the absence of a revolutionary party of the working class. The left wing of the Social Democratic Party which during the revolutionary crisis operated as the Spartakists was no less revolutionary than the Russian Bolsheviks. There was no Lenin in Germany; but Marxists do not believe that history is made by great men. Then who knows that Rosa Luxemburg would not have played the role if the stage was set in

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Germany as it was in Russia by Lenin. In Hungary the revolution collapsed not only because of the absence of a competent leadership—that defect was already there—but the real cause of the defeat of the Hungarian revolution was foreign military intervention. The other cause was the hostility of the peasantry. In Bavaria also the revolution was killed by the peasantry and the French army of occupation in the Palatinate was the standing menace. If necessary it would have marched into Bavaria and overthrown the revolutionary Government just as the Rumanian army did in the case of Hungary.

“Germany was the only country where objective conditions for the success of the revolution still appeared to be favourable. Military defeat had accentuated the economic crisis. The conditions of the working class were growing worse. Even the peasantry was feeling the pinch. But the army had not joined the revolution. Why not fill the gap from outside? In Russia the revolution had already created an army which could be placed at the disposal of the German working class. On the other hand the allied powers had begun to intervene actively in Russia. In the earlier part of the year 1920 the military position of the Soviet Government appeared to be very precarious. In the situation it became necessary to make a desperate effort to promote revolution in Western Europe. But the defeat of the Red army near Warsaw brought that initial chapter of the Russian Revolution definitely to a close. The perspective of world revolution disappeared for the time being. The Russian revolution was left alone to look for itself.

"The expectation that revolution would take place in other countries was not fulfilled.....External aid may be useful but unless the internal conditions of a country are favourable for the victory of revolution it can be of little avail. A dispassionate view of things must bring us to the undesirable conclusion that the revolutionary movement did not succeed in Western European countries because conditions necessary for the purpose were more or less absent there.

"By this it is not meant that capitalism had not played out its progressive role; that the working class had not been driven to a position where it must bid for the capture of power with the object of reorganising society on the basis of a new mode of production. All the conditions of capitalist decay and disorganisation were more or less there. But the decisive factor in a revolutionary situation is the State—the break-down of which is the decisive condition for the victory of the revolution. This has been absent in the leading European countries except for a short period immediately after the War and that also only for the central European countries.

"In face of the danger of revolution even the intensely nationalistic bourgeois states developed an international solidarity on the basis of class interests. So the temporary break-down of the capitalist state in Austria and Germany were quickly repaired with the help of those very powers which had contributed to the break-down. The result was the defeat of the working class in Germany.

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“Once the perspective of an immediate revolution in any of the leading West European countries disappeared the development in Russia was pre-determined.....Man makes history but can do so only with the material available. Already in 1921 the perspective of future development was sufficiently clear to Lenin.

“The New Economic Policy was not only a new policy for Russia it was a new orientation of the entire international revolutionary movement. The policy of United Front was dictated by the long perspective of revolutionary development. Nor was the policy surely “economic” for Russia herself, for her too it was a new political policy.....From that time on, the social foundation of the revolutionary state was continually broadened to embrace classes which can be involved in a process of economic reconstruction which, given the necessary political guarantee would develop eventually into socialism but was not Socialistic by itself.”*

These were the basic conditions which determined the tactical line of the Communist International (from 1921 to 1928) in the industrial countries of the world. The task of the Communists was to win over the confidence of the working class following the social democratic leadership. This could be done by working in the mass trade unions which were under the leadership of social democrats.

By the application of these tactics indeed the

* Excerpts from M. N. Roy's 'Review and Perspective of the Russian Revolution'— “Independent India.”

Communists were able to establish organic contact with the rank and file of the working class movement. They had acquired good amount of political influence over them. This could be judged from the result of election to the factory committees, municipal bodies and parliaments. The greater and greater number of Communists were returned in these elections. Moreover the membership of the Communist Parties had considerably increased.

Not withstanding these facts the Sixth Congress adopted such a tactical line which demanded of the Communists to withdraw from the trade unions under the leadership of the reformists; to build up Red trade unions under the direct leadership of the Communists and declare an open war on the Social Democratic Parties.

Chapter XVIII

Disagreement And Expulsion

From his sick bed, in a lengthy document, Roy submitted his views on the Indian question to the Executive Committee of the Communist International. While clarifying his point of view and exposing the baseless accusations levelled against him in his absence by Com. Kusinen at the Sixth World Congress, he maintained, "in the period of capitalist decay the forms and methods of colonial exploitation were bound to change." But for some unknown reasons, his views were not considered !

Meanwhile the application of ultra-left line prescribed by the Sixth World Congress began isolating the Communists every where from the masses of the people whom they sought to mobilise in a revolutionary struggle against imperialist-cum-capitalist offensive.

In China, those Communists who were all along

opposed to Roy's proposal (in 1927)* to take an offensive against the rising counter-revolutionary forces when it was sure to bring victory to the masses immediately became the exponents of the theory of "Armed Insurrections and the Soviets." They indeed began leading a defeated army which was nothing but to lead into a blind alley. In this process the entire Communist Party of China was destroyed.

In India, by March 1929 a number of Communists who could have some regard for the realities of the situation were arrested in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Nevertheless those Communists who were out, blinded by their sense of infallible orthodoxy, left the Congress and began to declare that the "Congress movement was counter-revolutionary." On the one hand they raised the cry "Down with the Independence of India League" (founded by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as left wing Congress platform) on the other hand they called upon the petty bourgeois youths to fight against the Congress and for the cause of Communism ! Above all they gave the slogan of the the "Soviet" as against the Imperialist Commission on Reform and the Round Table Conference. To them the immediate task appeared to be the "establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Enchanted by the phenomenal development of the working class movement and encouraged by the new line of the C. I. some of those calling themselves "orthodox communists" began leading the over-exha-

* See Chapter XIV.

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usted workers of Bombay in another general strike, which finally broke up one of the most powerful trade unions in the East namely the Girni Kamgar Union (Red Flag). Thus they were anxious to develop every strike taking place for collective bargaining as a revolutionary struggle for the establishment of the "Socialist state."

In the industrial countries of the world such as England, France and Germany, those Communists who chose to follow blindly the new line of the C. I. withdrew from the reformist trade unions. They in turn made efforts to build up "Red Trade Unions" under their leadership! But they could not succeed. Yet the working class followed the reformist leadership. The Communists had to win over their confidence. But this could not be done by leaving the workers to the mercy of those who time and again allied with their exploiters. To withdraw from these trade unions was to cut themselves off from the organic contact with the masses.

As a result, in the new elections to the factory committees, municipal bodies and parliaments, only a few Communists were returned. Moreover there was a sudden drop in the membership of the Communist Parties in all the leading industrial countries.

A number of leading Communists—formerly collaborators of Lenin and founders of the Communist Parties in their respective countries opposed this suicidal tactical line. Thereupon most of them were expelled from the International. Later on they constituted themselves as the Communist Opposition.

At this moment Roy was in Germany. On recovery from illness he did not return to Russia. His po-

int of view having been rejected by the Sixth World Congress, he was not re-elected to the Executive Committee of the International of which he was a member ever since its foundation.

As a disciplined Communist, for over a year, Roy had not openly uttered a single word against the new line of the C. I. He hoped that the comrades responsible for its adoption by the International would in course of experience realise their mistakes and the International would return to the old Marxist-Leninist tactical line rejected by the Sixth World Congress. But it was hoping against hope.

At this juncture there was a serious crisis in the German Communist movement. This was the result of the application of the ultra-left line of the C. I. The membership of the party had considerably decreased and its influence over the working class began to be undermined.

The German Communist Party was the most powerful, and well organised of all the Parties in continental countries. It commanded greater influence over the working masses than any other political party. But it was losing ground to the advantage of the Social Democratic Party whose sins of omission and commission we have already described.

In utter disregard to the realities of the situation, the German Communist Party on the 1st of May gave the slogan of an armed insurrection in Berlin. Only a few thousand of the workers came out in the street (See Strasse-A workers' locality) with arms. Thereupon the police resorted to firing and forty workers were shot dead. Next day when the coffins of these victims

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of capitalist terror were carried in a procession through the workers' locality to the graveyard the workers were not stirred up and only a few thousands joined the procession. This made clear beyond doubt that it was simply quixotic to give such an ultra-left slogan in utter disregard to the realities of the situation.

Roy was not only concerned with the development of the national liberation movements in the colonial countries. He was as much concerned with the development of the working class movement in the world. Moreover he had actively participated in the French and German workers' movement for freedom. He was organically connected with its rank and file.

Roy was too great a revolutionary to keep out in this crisis. His revolutionary conviction demanded of him to speak out.

Therefore Roy wrote in the German Communist Opposition press a number of articles entitled "The Crisis in the Communist International" analysing the various causes that led to the crisis in the International. He also wrote criticising the German Communist Party for its ultra left actions of the 1st May.

Thereafter, in September 1929, Roy was expelled from the C. I. and no definite reason was given. In a lengthy article entitled "My Crime"* he wrote in the

"For some time I have been standing before the 'Sacred Guillotine' the mad application of which causing such a havoc to the International Communist

* An exhibit in the Meerut Case.

Movement. I have stood in that position for nearly a year, not shuddering with the fear for my head, but aghast at the incompetence of those who have usurped the leadership of the movement, and amazed at the temerity with which this incompetence and irresponsible leadership is driving the movement to rack and ruin. At last has come my turn, inexplicably delayed. At the Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the C. I. my humble head was demanded by the gentle Kusinen in his characteristic manner of shirking responsibility. Referring to my latest "crime"—contribution to the press of the German Opposition—he wondered if after the commission of such a heinous crime one could still deserve to be a comrade of those whose views he represented. The stage was set for the purpose. The "masses" responded. The prompted cry—'à la guillotine'—was raised from the obscure corner, and one connected with the Communist International nearly from its very foundation, active in the revolutionary movement for years, previously hitherto suspected and criticised for alleged "left deviations", was placed automatically outside the pale of the C. I. After some unfortunate attacks by Losowskys and Schubins, Manuisky obviously with the authority of the Russian delegation clinched the affair by damning me as a 'renegade'. It was a very simple procedure. No evidence whatsoever was produced to show how a traditional 'leftist' has become a right opportunist, how one suddenly became a 'renegade' after more than twenty years' active service to the revolution.

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Kusinen simply asserted that I proposed the policy of making a block with the Indian Nationalist Bourgeoisie and Manuilsky roundly called me a "renegade".

"This itself may not be sufficiently important to arrest the attention of the entire International. But it is important and deserves attention as a symptom of the state of affairs at the top of the movement. Therefore I consider it necessary to place before the C. I. the facts of the case.

"The attack upon me suddenly began at the Sixth World Congress in which I was not present owing to illness. In his report on the Colonial Question Kusinen attacked me as the father of the so called theory of "decolonisation". According to him, I had put forward the view that British Imperialism would gradually lead the Indian people to Freedom. On this allegation, I was characterised in the report as well as in the thesis (the tone was modified in the corrected stenogramme of the report and final version of the thesis) as "lackey of imperialism". The characterisation would be perfectly correct had the allegation been proved. This, however, was not done although Kusinen went to the extent of asserting that in the columns of the "Vanguard" and the "Masses" which I edited, I had for years propagated this Social Democratic theory. The utter unfoundedness of the assertion is proved by the files of those journals. I challenge any body to find one single passage in them which bears out Kusinen's allegation. Then, those Journals were published under my editorship as the central organ of the Communist propaganda

in India from May 1922 to the beginning of 1928 (I am not responsible for the first 8 months of 1927 when I was away in China). During all that time I was not once censored for right deviation. Indeed, criticism made occasionally by minor comrades was rather from the point of view—groundlessly ascribed to me now—namely, overestimating the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie. In short, for nearly five years the leadership of the International considered my point of view, on the whole, correct; otherwise I should have long ago been removed from the position I occupied. Now it is discovered that all the time I have been a Social Democratic lackey of imperialism. Logically then, it must be admitted that until the Sixth Congress, the C. I. had a wrong point of view as regards India. If the report and the thesis of the Sixth Congress contain the highest wisdom of Leninism, then, as far as the colonial (particularly Indian) question is concerned, Lenin, Zinovieff, Bukharin, Stalin all in their respective turns have been anti-Leninist, Social Democratic Lackeys of imperialism. And this is precisely the purport of the resolution on the colonial as well as other questions of the Sixth Congress. They represent a serious deviation from the tactical teachings of Lenin. Therefore I expressed my disagreement with them. This is one of my crimes for which I am sentenced to the “Guillotine” of expulsion as a “renegade” to Communism.

“To revert to the theory of “decolonisation” the fatherhood of which is the ostensible cause of victimisation. The unfortunate term has a little history.

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While I was away in China (1927) a new comrade from India came to Moscow. In his report he emphasised on the rapid development of modern industry in India. Such a development, which all along I had pointed out as a basic feature of the situation in post-war India, inevitably produces two tendencies which must be carefully observed by us for the purpose of adjusting our tactics to the realities of the situation. These tendencies are sharpening of the class antagonism inside the nationalist movement on the one side, and compromise between the nationalist bourgeoisie and foreign imperialism on the other. Industrialization of the country, even if it were done mainly with imperialist capital (which is not the case in India) is advantageous to the native bourgeoisie. These fight against imperialism because it obstructs the free development of their class. Consequently when imperialism, forced by its inner contradictions, permits—even encourages (as lately in the case of India) partial industrialization of colonial country, the basis of antagonism between the native bourgeoisie and foreign imperialism narrows down. The nationalist united front tends to break up, and a new united front of the native bourgeoisie with foreign imperialism is formed as against the working class. In such a situation, the native bourgeoisie outgrows the previous state of absolute colonial oppression. In summarizing the debate on the report of the Indian delegate Bukharin suggested that the Commission set up for examining the question should report on the process of such "decolonization" (he used the term for the first time, evidently in a tentative and relative sense).

“On my return ×, I was charged to draft a resolution on the basis of the preparatory work accomplished by the Commission. The resolution drafted by me which was never formally accepted (not because there was any serious objection to it, but because of the waning of interest in the subject) subsequently became the main weapon against me. It was that document that all my heresies were discovered in, when subsequently it became necessary to find evidence in support of a verdict already secretly pronounced against me for some unknown crime. If the document contained the testimony of my crime, why was it not published ? It was never done, because the very document proved how atrociously groundless are the allegations against me. Space does not permit extensive quotation, and I have not the means to publish such lengthy document (40 pages typewritten). Therefore I must be content with citing the most vital passages. After analysing the economic conditions of the country and giving facts marking the new tendencies of post-war colonial exploitation I made the following conclusion:—

“Imperialism must proceed very cautiously in this new path which is likely to lead it out of the post-war crisis as to destruction. The implication of the new policy is gradual “decolonization” of India, which will be allowed eventually to evolve out the state of “dependency” to “Dominion status.” The Indian bourgeoisie instead of being kept down as a potential rival, will be granted partnership in the

× From China—author.

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economic development of the country under the hegemony of the imperialist finance. From a backward agricultural colonial possession, India will become a modern industrial country—"Member of the British Commonwealth of free nations". India is in a process of "decolonisation" in so far as the policy, forced upon imperialism by the post-war crisis of capitalism, abolishes the old, antiquated forms and methods of colonial exploitation in favour of new forms and new methods. The forces of production which were so far denied the possibilities of normal growth are unfettered. The very basis of national economy changes. Old class relations are replaced by new class relations. The basic industry—agriculture—stands on the verge of revolution.....The native bourgeoisie acquire an ever increasing share in the control of the economic life of the country. These changes in the economic sphere have their political reflex. The unavoidable process of gradual "decolonisation" has in it the germs of disruption of the Empire.

"The Indian bourgeoisie outgrow the state of absolute colonial suppression.....In order to stabilise its economic basis, strengthen its position in India, British imperialism is obliged to adopt a policy which cannot be put into practice without making certain concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie. These concessions are not conquered by the nationalist bourgeoisie. They are gifts (reluctant and obligatory) of imperialism. Therefore the process of "decolonisation" is parallel to the process of de-revolutionization of the nationalist bourgeoisie."

"It is obvious from the above quotation (of course only for unprejudiced readers) that the term "de-colonisation" is used tentatively by way of indicating a tendency and relatively only in connection with the bourgeoisie who constitute a very small fraction of the entire population. Nowhere is it stated that the tendency affects the entire people. Much less is it even implied that there is the least possibility of the Indian people being free with the sanction of imperialism. On the contrary, it is clearly asserted that the process of certain improvement in the condition of the bourgeoisie is the result of a plan to intensify the exploitation of the nation as a whole. Never-the-less, this is the cross on which I was crucified before the Sixth Congress of the C. I.

"Now about the perverse love that according to Kusinen I have suddenly developed for the Nationalist bourgeoisie. Here again my entire past record ever since the Second Congress of the C. I. (1920) gives the lie to the assertion made by Kusinen. In the Second Congress, I disagreed with Lenin about the role of the bourgeoisie in the colonial revolutionary movement. My views on the question are recorded in the thesis adopted by the Second Congress as supplementary to those drafted by Lenin. I can simply ask everybody who wants to judge me on the basis of my own views and actions to read my writings. In the draft resolution referred to above I wrote in September 1927:—

"All these factors taken together determine the character of the Indian Nationalist bourgeoisie. They

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are no longer a revolutionary force. Not only from the point of view of the internal conditions of India but also from the point of view of present world conditions the Indian bourgeoisie are rallied on the side of counter-revolution. They cannot and do not lead or participate in the struggle for national freedom (completely outside the British Empire).....Indian revolution must still realise a programme of bourgeois democracy; but it is no longer a bourgeois revolution, because it can and will succeed only by breaking the bound of capitalist society. ”

“Still the Tenth Plenum of the International Executive puts me outside the pale of the C. I. on the ground that I advocated the opportunist policy of a block with the nationalist bourgeoisie. The present leadership of the International obviously has a very low opinion about the intelligence of the rank and file. In the Tenth Plenum a new charge could be brought against me—writing in the Press of the Brandlerist renegades (Opposition in the Communist Party of Germany). This made the thing easier for the ruling clique. It was no longer necessary to examine what was written; the fact that it was written in the opposition press was enough to damn the writer irrespective of what he actually wrote.

“Kusinen made a feeble effort to combat my criticism of the resolution of the sixth Congress and of the catastrophic, ultra-left, sectarian Trotskyist line followed on the strength of that resolution. What he did, however was not to reply my criticism. (This he could not do, for my criticism consisted mostly of

pointing out facts, proving that the Sixth Congress resolution was based upon false interpretation of the situation). He simply distorted what I said. He did not quote me. He simply told the Plenum what he read in my writing. In an article to the organ of the German Opposition I pointed out that just when the Swaraj Party was putting up a parliamentary resistance to imperialist autocracy in connection with the Public Safety Bill, a manifesto of C. I. ended with the slogan, "Down with Imperialism," "Down with Swaraj Party." To point out the tactical blunder of issuing the slogan at the moment, did not mean that I considered the Swaraj Party as friendly to Communism. On the contrary for years I had combatted the illusion entertained by the C. I. leadership regarding the revolutionary role of the Swaraj Party. Here again I can only refer to the records for evidence. Unable to justify the grievous mistake of issuing such stupid slogan against the Swaraj Party at that very unfortunate moment, Kusinen resorts to the cheap demagogy of ascribing to me opportunist illusion about the Swaraj Party. For example, he goes to the extent of asserting that I have now 'rebaptized the Swarajists as Independents.' If he were honest in his manner of conducting a political discussion, he could not make such absurd assertion, for nowhere is there the least ground for it. The nationalist bourgeoisie cannot be effectively exposed in their compromising role by simply shouting stupid provocative slogans. For this purpose the Communists must follow the policy of class differentiation. The petty bourgeois masses must be supported in their revolt

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against the reformist leadership of the big bourgeoisie, not-with-standing that this revolt is often weak and vascillating. And precisely on this crucial point the present line of the C. I. goes far over the head of the situation. The policy of isolating ourselves on the Olympian heights of sectarianism drives the petty bourgeois masses in the direction of Fascism. The Indian experts of the C. I. apparatus would do well to observe this dangerous tendency of the situation. A Leninist policy of United Front would have transformed the petty bourgeois 'League of Independence' into a powerful weapon to develop the revolution. This is a valuable lesson of the experience in China. Kusinen's incoherent phillipins against me, do not in the least change the tragic fact that the present leadership of the C. I. advised the young inexperienced Communists in India to withdraw into their very small shell, precisely when petty bourgeois masses were coming towards the working class, to be led in the national revolutionary struggle. Kusinen could not possibly dispute the fact that the petty bourgeois masses 'remain revolutionary', but he would not have any thing to do with their organisations nor would he permit the proletariat to establish any organisational connection with them. My criticism of this sectarianism is interpreted as a demand for an opportunist block with the entire bourgeoisie.

"The Sixth Congress attributed to me a social democratic theory without presenting before the International the document in which the thesis is supposed to be contained. Not being present at the Congress, I could not defend my position, and explain my point of view

as it really is. Soon after the report and the resolution of the Congress were published, I submitted to the Executive Committee of the C. I. a comprehensive statement of my views. The statement also contained the criticism of Kusinen's report and disagreement with the tactical line laid down by the Sixth Congress on the basis of their report. Why did not the International Executive publish that document ? If in it is contained the evidence of opportunist deviation on my part, its publication would have been sufficient to condemn me. It is another long document which it is not within my means to publish so that the International might be acquainted with the facts of the case—the real issues disputed. Is it not logical to believe that the present leadership of the C. I. suppressed the document, because they are not able to dispute the facts and arguments stated therein proving the incorrectness of the report and the thesis of the Sixth Congress ?

“ The two main deviations attributed to me, contradict each other. I could not possibly maintain them both, unless I were lunatic. To point that the Indian bourgeoisie are outgrowing the condition of absolute colonial suppression is not a Social Democratic deviation. On my part I simply point out a tendency which characterises the situation. The term “ de-colonisation ” is a secondary issue. A Marxist must deal in facts not in terms and catch-phrases. The point at issue at the Sixth Congress is whether the forms and methods of the colonial exploitation in the post-war period of capitalist decline must necessarily be the same (are the same), as the pre-war days of capitalist prosperity and

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expansion. I maintain they are not. These I proved exhaustively in the statement on the discussion of the Indian question in the Sixth Congress—a document suppressed by the E. C. C. I. apparatus. If I maintain this point of view I cannot possibly advocate a policy of block with the nationalist bourgeoisie, unless I proposed a counter-revolutionary block. And I have not yet been accused of having done so. What I proposed and still propose is that in the given condition of India the Communist must take the initiative in organising a broadest possible united front of all the oppressed and exploited social elements under the hegemony of the proletariat, with a revolutionary democratic programme to conduct the fight simultaneously on two fronts—against foreign imperialists and the native bourgeoisie. The resolution of the Sixth Congress in principle does not reject such united front but practically does it by prohibiting the Communists to enter into any multi-class party. The resolution is full of glaring contradiction. On the one hand it is maintained that imperialist exploitation of the ENTIRE NATION is intensified; on the other hand it is stated that the nationalist bourgeoisie are counter-revolutionary. Why have these deserted the struggle against imperialism? Obviously the later is some how accomodating them within the frame work of colonial exploitation of the country as a whole. If they are still as oppressed as ever and there is no prospect of their position being improved, they would remain a revolutionary factor. So behind the radical phrases of the present leadership there still lurks the shadow of past opportunism.

Ultra-leftism* is likely to degenerate into opportunism any day when put to severe revolutionary test. If the Quixotic Soviet Republic of India is not realised through the magic method of mouthing catch-phrases, the pendulum may swing again to the other extreme and the policy of opportunist alliance with 'the revolutionary nationalist bourgeoisie' reserved.

"The crimes attributed to me I have not committed. My offence is that I lay claim to the right of independent thinking and this is not permissible in the present critical period through which the C. I. is passing. I was not declared a "renegade" and placed outside the pale of the official International, so long as I did not speak out my disagreement. The gag of silence was imposed upon me, the all mighty apparatus depriving me of all the means of expression. In the other words, for the unpardonable crime of independent thinking, I would have been quietly buried into oblivion, had I not dared raise my voice. But the duty of the revolutionary sometimes transgresses the narrow limit of arbitrary discipline. I was placed in a position where I found it was my revolutionary duty to join the Opposition against the present leadership which is reigning the International.

"I disagree with all the resolutions of the Sixth Congress not only with that on the Indian question. If the mistake were on one particular question, it might be advisable to wait, hoping that it would be corrected in course of time. But the mistaken line pursued in India is but a small part of a huge blun-

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der. Therefore, it is not permissible to keep quiet. The International is in a crisis which is manifested by the composition and exercise of its leadership."

CHAPTER XIX.

Attempts To Discredit Him.

The news about Roy's expulsion from the Communist International was broad-cast throughout the world by the imperialist news agencies. It was jubilantly received by vested interest in Great Britain and other capitalist countries of the world. The London "Times" came out with sensational headlines such as the "Fall Of The Moscow Agent"!

The imperialist press was not satisfied at that. The London "Times" published a series of articles against Roy. These were full of malicious lies and calumny. In a note affixed to these articles, the editor of the "Times" told its readers that the writer was an "authority" on the subject. The name of the supposed writer was Abdul Kadir.* According to the editor he was an ex-

* It is said that Abdul Kadir was one of the Mohajirins (See Chapter XI) who went over to Russian Turkestan where most of them were trained and politically

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Communist; was in Moscow for a number of years and personally knew M. N. Roy.

Curiously enough these articles were not only written to throw mud on M. N. Roy. Therein was the most vulgar criticism of Lenin and even that of Stalin. They were concluded by surreptitiously depicting Lenin the founder of Modern Russia, Roy and Stalin as persons disinterested in the Indian national liberation movement under the Congress banner.

It can be said without any hesitation whatsoever that the main object of these articles—whoever might be the writer—was to create a cleavage between M. N. Roy a pioneer of national democratic revolution and the rank and file of the movement for national independence of the Indian people from imperialist domination.

Soon after this, the replica of these articles appeared with only a slight change in the Indian press* in the name of one Aya Tendulkar. It was suggested therein that Roy was not expelled from the Communist International for any political difference. According to Tendulkar's information the reason of Roy's expulsion was that he had "misappropriated" the "Moscow Gold" and deposited the amount in one of the Swiss Banks !

educated by Roy at the India House and the Military School founded by him (Roy) at Tashkent.

After a few years' stay, Abdul Kadir, it is said, left Moscow for England, There he compromised his views. Finally he was appointed a lecturer in "Pushtu" at the University of London.!

In order to prove his allegations against Roy and especially to gain the confidence of the Indian public and the rank and file of the nationalist movement, Tendulkar went on to quote the authority of one Paul Scheffer who was once upon a time a Moscow correspondent of a German Daily ('Berliner Taga-Blatt'). Moreover Tendulkar non-chalantly stated therein that Herr Scheffer was his colleague working for the same German Daily.

But he quoted Herr Scheffer's authority at his own peril. Indeed this German was a correspondent of the said German Daily in Moscow; there is no denying the fact. But at the same time let the whole fact be stated, as truthfully as it is.

On investigation made by the Russian secret Police it was found out that Herr Scheffer was an agent of the British secret Police while he was a Moscow correspondent of the Berliner. He was proved to be in close contact with the Scotland Yard and therefore he (that is Herr Scheffer) was expelled from Russia.

By quoting the authority of the notorious Herr Scheffer, Tendulkar† only exposed his own colour. The

Foot-note of page 192* Indian Press:—

The "Advance" of Calcutta and the "Leader" of Allahabad gave publicity to Tendulkar's articles.

† In the capacity of the correspondent of a Berlin Daily Tendulkar came to India during the C. D. O. movement (1930-31). He wrote in the German Press

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Indian public and above all the rank and file of the nationalist movement could not be led into believing the stories surreptitiously broadcast by the imperialist agents abroad and in India.

Even to-day efforts * to discredit Roy do continue. But unfortunately for the imperialist agents and malicious mischief-mongers Roy's point of view is too well known now in India to allow them any chance to play their nefarious trade successfully.

many a damaging articles to the Congress movement while he was actually expected by well known nationalist leaders, to write favourably about it.

* Recently several articles appeared in the vernacular press.

CHAPTER XX

Renews His Activities

In spite of wilful misrepresentations of his views, malicious lies and mischievous propaganda by his antagonists, Roy was not perturbed. He stood like an unshakable tower. When a friend brought to his notice all these things going on, he quietly said, "Oh, I do not mind, let them do their worse."

Moreover in an interview granted to an Indian journalist Roy said that notwithstanding the fact of his formal expulsion, no one could place him outside the International Communist movement; the crisis in the International was due to the growth of the Communist movement in the world and therefore it was temporary. He was confident that the International, sooner or later, was bound to return to the old Leninist tactical line. Whatever might be the reason for his expulsion, in event of an attack by the capitalist countries of the world against the Soviet Union he would defend the fatherland of the workers of the world as a soldier ought to.

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Nevertheless with the changed condition for him, most of his 'faithful' followers, comrades and associates—especially Indians—deserted him. But he was not unaided to carry on his work. There were Communists, both in India and abroad who along with him were opposed to the suicidal tactical line of the Sixth World Congress.

To stand by the views held by Roy and other leaders of the International movement was not an easy job. This required indeed revolutionary honesty and courage of conviction. One must be prepared to face any trouble at the hands of those who were blinded by their sense of orthodoxy.

The moment he was physically well he began to renew his usual political activities. He got in touch with those elements in the International Communist and national revolutionary movements who were in complete agreement with his views.

Those Communists who dared disagree with the line of the Sixth World Congress were not merely oppositionists. They were convinced Communists and represented the old guard of Communism. Along with Brandler, August Thalheimer, Jay Lovestone and others, Roy was one of the outstanding leaders of the International Communist Opposition. This represented all the Opposition elements * in the Communist movement in the world.

The object of the Opposition was to work for the immediate return of the C. I. to the old Leninist tactical line. Of course it was neither a "Fourth International" nor the Opposition leaders ever dreamt of organising

Excluding Trotsky and his followers.

such a body. It was in reality an adhoc body to be disbanded the moment the International returned to the old Leninist tactical line given up by it in the summer of 1928.

The demands of the Opposition were:—

1. The Central leadership of the Communist movement that is C. I. must not render any financial assistance * to any of its national section except in case of an extreme emergency.
2. Those on spot must be allowed to follow such tactical line as required by the exigencies of the situation (of course these must be laid down in keeping with the letter and spirit of the principles and programme of the Communist International).
3. Those Communists expelled from the C. I. must be readmitted to the fold of the C. I.

The Opposition had their press organs in every country. Roy was one of the two editors of the Central organ and his articles on important topics concerning the working class movements in Europe and the national liberation struggle of the oppressed colonial countries were given the place of honour in all the organs of the Opposition. Roy's articles began to attract larger and larger number of the rank and file members of the working class movement. They began to appreciate the views of the Opposition. For, dispassionate discussion and fearless criticism of all the questions vital for the growth of the proletarian movement seemed to be the motto of the Opposition.

* To prevent beaurocratic and opportunist tendencies in the Party leadership.

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His activities in the German working class movement were indeed resented by the Tin-gods of German capitalism. The "Lokal-an-Zeiger" an organ of the Iron and Steel industry in a leading article demanded Roy's expulsion from Germany. For, it held that his presence in the given situation in Germany, was a matter of danger to 'peace and tranquility.' This made clear beyond any doubt that his existence in Germany even as a political refugee could not be tolerated. He must therefore live a life of a hunted man.

In spite of these difficulties he was bent upon carrying on his propaganda for the development of the movement in India and other parts of the world. The Indian question in particular kept Roy engaged during his second sojourn on the Continent.

The close of the year 1929 was marked in India by one of the most memorable events in the history of the struggle of the Indian people for national liberation. The Indian National Congress at Lahore finally made the momentous declaration to the effect that "Complete national independence was its immediate objective." Roy took this opportunity to place his views on the vexed problem of Indian liberation before the rank and file of the national Congress. In a pamphlet entitled "The Lessons Of The Lahore Congress"* he wrote as follows:-

* The pamphlet was signed also by Tayab Shaikh the then secretary of the Hindusthan Association of Central Europe, Kunwer Brajesh Singh—brother of the late Rajah Audhesh Singh of Kalakanker and others. It was published in the Indian Press notably in the "Vanguard" edited by Meherally.

"In his presidential address Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru called upon the Lahore Congress 'to declare in favour of Complete Independence and to devise schemes and sanctions in order to achieve its goal'. The first part of the task the Congress has done. At last, it has definitely declared its goal to be complete national freedom. This is a very important resolution. The Lahore Congress will remain a landmark in the history of our struggle for freedom for having made this momentous decision. But the second task set to it by its president has not been accomplished. The declaration in favour of complete independence, despite its historic significance as such, will remain a mere expression of desire, until the people of India have been clearly indicated the road leading to that coveted goal. As the leader of the movement for freedom the Congress must find that road, and guide the Indian people to overcome the treacherous pitfalls and dangerous difficulties besetting it.

"A critical analysis of our accomplishments is a condition for our ability to build further upon them. If we want to appreciate properly the Lahore Congress as opening up a new phase in our struggle for freedom, we must be conscious of the defects in its resolution, the sooner to remove them so that the Indian people can travel triumphantly on the road to freedom.

"For the consideration of all those who unconditionally stand for complete national independence we propose the following as an outline of the Programme of National Revolution: 1. Establishment of

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a Federal Republic of India with an advanced Democratic Constitution the Executive being fully responsible to a single-chamber Parliament elected by universal (men and women) adult suffrage; 2. Provincial Autonomy in local matters, the provinces, reconstructed for assuring as far as possible linguistic and religious homogeneity, having government as democratic as the central government; 3. Abolition (without compensation) of the Native states and Landlordism by the decree of the Democratic National State empowering the peasants to confiscate the land; 4. Nationalization of the land, the cultivators having the occupancy right in return for the payment to the government of a unitary land-tax which shall not exceed 15 percent of the net income; 5. Abolition of all other charges on the peasantry (for example irrigation-tax) and of indirect Taxation (salt-tax, excise duties, protective customs duty etc.); 6. Complete exemption of taxation for peasants living on "uneconomic holdings"; 7. Liquidation of agricultural indebtedness in the case of the peasants in the state of insolvency; 8. Legislation for the control of usury (interest not to exceed 10 per cent per annum); 9. Organization of agricultural banks with state aid for providing cheap credit to the peasants; 10. Nationalization of the mineral resources and public utilities; 11. Legislation fixing the working-day for the wage-labourer to 8 hours; 12. Minimum wages guaranteeing a constantly rising standard of living of the worker to be fixed by law; 13. Social Insurance (against unemployment, sickness, old-age, and maternity)—the employers and the state contributing 75 per cent of the fund; 14. Legalisation of Trade

Unions and of the workers' right to strike and organise their class political party; 15. Freedom of the press, platform and association; 16. Freedom of religion and worship; 17. protection for minorities; 18. Free and compulsory primary education; and 19. Right to bear arms.

“ The introduction of these measures will raise India to the level of a modern civilized country. If this hastily drawn picture of free India appears to be in some points rather more advanced than the condition in many a modern civilized country, it is ' because we want to guarantee that the fruits of the revolution will be equitably distributed among the great majority of the nation who will fight for them. It is however, only a question of detail. The programme as a whole is the programme of a social transformation which raises a country from the state of mediaeval backwardness to that of modern civilization. And all the modern civilized countries have come where they are to-day through the realization of this programme essentially. A brief analysis of the more important items will make this clear.

“ The first and second points of the programme lay down the Principle—basic Constitution of free India. By their very nature these exclude any possibility of continued foreign domination in a veiled form. The right of the Indian people to have their country administered according to these established principles of democracy cannot be disputed without mocking at the entire history of those very nations, including England who claim to be the leader of modern civilisation. The effective solution of the ugly and incidiously fomented communal dissensions, which provide British imperialism

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with a plausible pretext for ruling India, will be found in a democratic Federal Republic admitting Provincial autonomy as regards linguistic demarcations, local peculiarities and religious traditions. Any doubt or suspicion, that may still linger as the heritage of the past will be satisfied with the constitutional provision for the protection of minorities. In short, on the basis of the democratic principles embodied in the first two items of the programme the constitution of the government of free India can be easily cast with due respect for the interest of the population.

“ The communal question has no material basis. Its roots are not stuck in the masses. It is limited to small sections of the respective religious or social groups. As soon as a common basis will be found for the majority, the small bands of mischief-makers will find their trade declining and will have to wind up their nefarious business, unless they would defy a constitution based upon the interests of the overwhelming majority. Should they dare follow this last mad course, they must be sternly dealt with for national progress and prosperity. What is the communal interest, that the British pretend to protect ? Do they grant higher protective tariff for industries owned by the Mohammedan or Parsi capitalists than to those owned by the Hindus ? They do not. Do they impose lighter taxes upon the Mohammedans, non-Brahmins, Sikhs etc. ? They do not. On the other hand, are the interests of the Mohammedans, Shikhs or non-Brahmins differ from those of the Hindus ? Does a Hindu employer pay more

to a worker when he happens to be his co-religionist ? He does not. Is it not a common phenomenon that hundreds of thousands of workers of different religion and community are employed together and on similar conditions by capitalists of one particular faith ? A Mohammedan landlord does not collect more rent from a Hindu tenant or vice versa. In view of these and many other facts, which challenge the theory of communal interests from all sides it is clear that this ugly disease is artificial, touching only the surface of the situation. Only a handful of johukumwallahs belonging to all the communities who hanker for the miserable crumbs of government jobs or similar cheap emoluments as the gift of the foreign rulers raise the dust of communal dissention. Then there are the Sangathani Pundits on the one camp and the mad Mullahs on the other, who act as the agents of reaction and foreign imperialism seeking to foist the communal canker on the deplorable ignorance of the masses. While the former band of the communalists, that is, the johukumwallah office-hunters, will find it difficult to play their pernicious trade when there will be no foreign master to set them on, the latter lot, Sangathanis, Hindu-Sabhawallah and mad Mullahs are so many 'relics of a bygone age' which will be purged out of a modernized Indian body-politic. Meanwhile these venerable gentlemen should be warned to keep out of politics. In short, a modern democratic constitution with gaurantees and safeguards to do away with doubts and suspicions is the only radical cure for communal canker flourishing but superficially in limited spots on the Indian body-politic.



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“Industrial development of India is a common aspiration of the nationalist movement. What does this very legitimate and progressive aspiration signify? It signifies that the social structure of India should undergo a revolution: that antiquated means and modes of production should be discarded in favour of modern ones. The realization of this aspiration demands disruption of the old feudal, semi-feudal and akin forms of land-ownership. For, a specific mode of production cannot be discarded without destroying the form of property with which it is related. Until now we have seen only one side of the picture—foreign imperialism hindering the economic development of India. But there is another side of the picture which demands equal if not greater attention—factors and conditions inside the country having similar reactionary significance. It is true that the internal reaction was galvanized by the intervention of foreign imperialism. Nevertheless the progressive forces must be conscious of the double agency of reaction, and should strive to remove the one as well as the other. Elimination of the foreign factor alone will not clear the ground; still less will the protectionism quicken the industrialization of the country.

“The basic conditions for the transformation of India into a modern industrial country are: 1. the release of labour from the less productive employment on the land, 2. conversion of the accumulated wealth into fluid productive capital, and 3. development of the purchasing power of the masses. Neither unrestricted protectionism nor even national freedom (which is the condition for real fiscal autonomy) will create all these conditions,

unless national freedom means the beginning of a national revolution along the lines indicated in the programme outlined above. For industrial development, desired from the point of view of all-round national prosperity, protectionism is suicidal. Protective tariffs automatically send prices high. Unless the wages of the workers and income of the peasantry rise proportionately the immediate effect of protection will be a restriction of trade. In other words, under the present conditions of India in which the wages hardly rise and the peasantry sink into pauperization, protectionism is a very short-sighted policy. Its immediate effects may satisfy the blind greed of some capitalists, but it will certainly not contribute to the desired economic prosperity of the nation.

“The introduction of the measures proposed by us will pour new blood in the economic veins of the country. The abolition of the Native States and landlordism is not a measure for injuring personally the few thousand gentlemen and ladies belonging to a specified category. Needless to say that we regard them not as so many individuals, but as representing a certain form of property which has become detrimental to the economic progress of the entire nation. The greater interest of nation demands a change of the system, and those profiting by the reactionary system must consequently disappear from their parasitic existence. In proposing this necessary revolutionary measure we are guided by the basic principle of social morality—‘greatest good for the greatest number.’ The system to be abolished is the absorption of a considerable part of

the national income by a small minority (the Maharajahs, Rajas, Talukdars, Zamindars with their families, dependents and household employees all together count less than 10,000,000 out of the total population of 350,000,000). The wealth accruing to this parasitic class is not converted into productive capital. Most of it is either hoarded up as treasures, jewellerys, ornaments etc., or squandered in demoralising luxuries. Fractions of it find their way to investment in government stocks or even in foreign banks producing a very small rate of fixed interest. Only a very small part is devoted to any productive purpose. Our proposal is that this considerable part of the national wealth should be detached from their present parasitic possessors, and transferred to quarters where it will become a mighty stimulus for the economic life of the entire nation. Under the new system, what is to-day the unearned income of a parasitic minority will go to a democratic state which in its turn, will thus have a solid basis for introducing extensively a modern credit system as a great incentive for rapid development of trade and industry. Now the landlords' due to the government represents a small fraction of what they extract from the peasants in the forms of legal rent and arbitrary levies. So the reduction of the burden of the peasantry to a unitary land-tax not exceeding 15 percent of the net income will not in any way affect the treasury of the free national government. On the other hand, left in possession of a larger share of their production the peasantry will be in a position to buy more necessities of life and modern implements for improving its mode

of cultivation. The consequence is not difficult to imagine. The trade will expand, there will be new incentives for industry and being able to employ modern implements of cultivation the peasant will increase the productivity of the land thus supplying continuous impetus to the entire economic life of the country.

“A protestant king of England was prepared to be Roman Catholic on the ground that ‘Paris is worth a mass’. This prospect of the Indian people leaving behind the state of economic stagnation and poverty and marching rapidly on the road of progress and prosperity is worth risking the displeasure of a parasitic minority which has always been a strong support for the British Domination. This negligible risk, however appears to outweigh the better judgment of many. For example, last year the ugly snarling of the Punjab landlords rather nonplused Jawaharlal Nehru who subsequently placed all kinds of amendments on his proposal of land-nationalization. He even went to the extent of providing in the programme of the Independence League, for compensation to the landlords whose estates may be nationalized. Nationalization with compensation is to give away with left hand what one gets in the right. Where shall the national government find the huge sums of money that would be necessary should the former owners of the nationalized estates be compensated? It would either remain heavily indebted to the ex-landlords who would thus become the dictators of the country or it must impose such heavy taxes on the rest of the population as would cripple trade and industry.

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“ So looked at from every angle of vision it becomes evident that the people of India cannot work out their destiny except through a radical break with the past—without sweeping clear away all the ‘relics of a bygone age.’ The peasantry constitute the overwhelming majority of the Indian nation. The movement of freedom will never be successful, unless it secures the active support of the peasantry. In order to secure their active and abiding support the nationalist movement must present before them a picture of conditions which a free national government will create for them. The French Revolution mercilessly destroyed the feudal aristocracy and gave land to the peasantry. This basic achievement of the French Revolution was the foundation of the tremendous military power of Napoleon. For twenty years the peasantry supported him with men and money in return for the land and the freedom from feudal oppression they had received in consequence of the revolution. In many countries of Europe the old order was not so drastically destroyed as in France. In course of time the landlords recovered their power and privilege, though partially. They thus become a standing menace to the democratic conquest of the revolution. Today, they constitute a pillar of Fascist reaction which has abolished democratic government in a number of European countries. As guarantee against such development in India we should beware of half measures. Appearing later, on the scene of the struggle for democratic freedom, India should learn from those who have already travelled the same way.

“ General Strike and non-payment of taxes, which

were advocated as weapons in the struggle for freedom by the President of the Lahore Congress as well as by the Left Opposition must be preceded by a period of propaganda and organization. There must be a programme of action for this period. As long as the movement remains without such a programme of action, general strike and non-payment of taxes cannot be more than high sounding slogans. The Congress or any other political body might call for a general strike; but that is not enough. The readiness of the workers to respond to the call is the decisive factor. The events of the last two years have demonstrated the readiness of the workers to strike but they have struck or resisted the attack of the employers primarily to promote or defend their immediate economic interests. Although often industrial strikes assume pronounced political complexion the workers are moved into action primarily by the consideration not of big political issues, but of questions immediately affecting their every day life—questions of wages, conditions of labour, treatment by the employers, right of assembly and organization etc. Therefore the readiness of the workers of the entire country to respond to the call of a political general strike can be created only by demonstrating to them in practice that the immediate grievances of their daily life are connected with the big political task—that of conquering national freedom. In other words the organisation of the political general strike as a weapon in the struggle for national freedom is conditional upon developing the struggle of the workers with immediate economic and partial political demands. Indeed, it is an illusion

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to believe that suddenly, one fine morning, the workers throughout the country will down tools obeying the mandate of the Congress or any other party. Such demonstrations may take place for a day or two and in specified localities; they have relative political value serving as the lever for developing the general movement but they do not paralyze the state machinery. Even in countries with very highly organized labour movement seldom have general strikes taken place in such mechanical way, all of a sudden responding to a call. In India under the present circumstances, the chances for such a mechanical action are still less. Here an effective general strike can happen only as dynamic outcome of one or the other local struggle. A simple industrial dispute in a particular locality can be the starting point of a gigantic movement which spreading like wild-fire, will culminate in a general strike affecting the entire country. For example the heroic struggle of the tin-plate workers of Golmuri could be the starting point. Agitation could be begun for having the workers of Jamshedpur declare a sympathetic strike. Then to extend the movement on the railways, collieries so on and so forth. But for developing the movement systematically in this way the agitation cannot be only on general political slogans. These should be combined with the immediate demands of the workers. Indeed in the first stages, the movement could be and should be developed, that is the strike movement could be extended only by agitating for the removal of the immediate grievances of the workers.

By conducting this agitation the Congress or any particular political party will mobilize larger and larger masses of workers around itself, thus coming nearer to the position where it can wield the weapon of general strike effectively. The general strike is an action not of the entire population, but of the workers—particularly of the workers employed in key-industries and productive occupations. Therefore the movement can never be successful unless it puts the immediate demands of these workers in the forefront of its agitation. So here again the necessity for a comprehensive and clearly defined programme of the National Revolution becomes evident. The General Strike cannot be something by itself. If it is meant seriously then it must be a link in the chain—the struggle for freedom developing by stages towards the final goal.

“The measures, that can be effective weapons in the struggle, may however, be disastrous, if prematurely applied. Both the general strike and non-payment of taxes belong to this category of measures. The general strike, as advocated both by Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose will be a political action. It will obviously not be a concerted action of the working class for enforcing some definite economic demands either of the entire class or of the workers of a particular industry or locality. Even in such a case a general strike tends to outgrow the bounds of a pure industrial dispute, and raises political issues. The English General Strike of 1926 was the example. In the short period of nine days the situation shar-

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pened into an acute crisis which admitted no middle course: either the Trade Union Congress must challenge the constitutional authority of the Parliament and lead the workers from the general strike to an insurrection for over-throwing the government; or the general strike must be called off leaving the miners in the lurch. If a general strike taking place on a purely industrial issue (to resist the reduction of the miners' wages) developed into such an acute revolutionary crisis there cannot be any doubt about the inevitable outcome of a general strike called for enforcing explicitly political demands. It can take place only as the prelude to a higher form of struggle for which our movement is obviously not yet prepared. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that all on a sudden in the immediate future, there will take place a general strike at the call of the Congress, the nationalist movement will blunder into the final struggle for power utterly unprepared and unequipped for the titanic task, and consequently will be disastrously defeated by the superior force of the enemy. Fortunately the danger is very remote. For, a general strike seriously challenging the authority of the government is very unlikely to happen by magic. It can happen only as the culminating point of an entire stage of the struggle for immediate economic and partial political demands, in which the forces of national freedom will be marshalled, trained, prepared and equipped for the final battle.

"The non-payment of taxes can be more easily organized than the general strike; and therefore, any

campaign in that direction is more likely to bring us prematurely in a clash with the established authorities. In view of the alarming consequences of any serious, large-scale no-tax campaign it is sure that it will never be undertaken. Thus non-payment of taxes is an utterly impractical slogan. Instead of deluding ourselves with high sounding slogans which cannot be put into practice, we must find a different way for approaching the peasantry with the object of setting them in movement which will mean a tremendous acquisition of strength for our struggle for freedom. The way is country-wide agitation for the redress of the immediate grievances of the peasantry. They are numerous and the agitation for their redress can develop into a powerful mass movement without immediately transgressing the limits of law. Once the movement had spread and the peasantry are involved in a struggle for the promotion and defence of their immediate interests, then it will be possible to organise tenants' strikes (which is meant by non-payment of taxes; if any thing definite is meant at all) for enforcing the demands of the peasantry. Non-payment of taxes that is tenants' strike just as the general strike of the workers is one of the numerous weapons in our armoury; but the party of national revolution must have a programme for the realization of which this and all other weapons are used in respective stages of the struggle.

"The Congress is committed to the goal of complete national independence, that is to say for

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the liberation of the great majority of the Indian people from the crushing burden of colonial exploitation by predatory imperialism.

"An objectively revolutionary mass movement for national freedom must indeed have a revolutionary programme that is a programme of national revolution. Without such a programme all attempts in the direction of non-payment of taxes by the peasantry or a general strike by the industrial workers must turn out to be futile ventures. These could only result in the dissipation of mass popular energy.

"Before the masses of the people are mobilised in a struggle for the conquest of the sovereignty of our people, they must be made conscious of the immediate termination of the foreign imperialist domination over India. This could be done by putting them in a series of struggles for the enforcement of their immediate economic partial demands. Once they could see clearly the picture of what they were made to fight for, let them then be put in a fateful struggle for the liberation of India from imperialist domination, the weapons of non-payment of taxes and general strike could be very fruitfully employed in the last stages of the struggle. This is the way to the collapse of the tottering edifice of imperialism.

"All along the post war period imperialism has been in a precarious condition. Attempts in the direction of industrial development of India under its hegemony were indeed frustrated by its crass inability

to export capital to India for the purpose. Its flow from British Metropolis stopped completely by 1923 and could not begin again until 1929. It has been a veritable vicious circle. A way out to deal with the crisis seemed to be an impossibility. Notwithstanding this fact it had begun dealing with the problem differently.*

"Nevertheless external causes aggravated the agricultural crisis with which imperialism was struggling in vain.^x The general decay of capitalism was indeed followed by a severe agrarian crisis throughout the world.

"Contraction of the world market brought down the prices of agricultural products. As an agricultural country, India has been hit hard by this. Suddenly the meagre purchasing power § of the bulk of her population has declined by half—further injuring British trade.

"Imports into India are paid by export of agricultural products. The heavy fall in the prices of

*See Pages 138-144

^x See Pages 140-144

§ Owing to the fall in agricultural prices since 1930 the aggregate income of the Indian masses has been decreasing at the alarming rate of Rs. 800 crores a year. Consequently collection of Imperialist tribute is cutting into the production that is to say depriving the producing masses even of the most minimum necessities of life. Indian masses are thus threatened with physical decay.

these has caused a corresponding drop of her capacity to purchase foreign commodities. The value of the total foreign trade of India decreased in 1930 to 442 crores of rupees as against 578 in the previous year. Four years ago the figure was 633. The export registered a decrease of 70 crores and the import of 84 crores. On the other hand the fall of prices of agricultural staples like cotton, jute, wheat, oil-seeds etc. below even the cost of production renders the peasant utterly unable to discharge their "obligation" (rent, interest, taxes etc.). In consequence of this economic depression and disorganisation there is a heavy deficit in the government budget. In view of the extreme poverty of the masses any new taxation will make the situation worse. Still in desperate plight the government had decided to impose heavy indirect taxes (duty on imports). The effect of this measure will be a further rise in the price of imported commodities. The discrepancy between the prices of agricultural and manufactured commodities will grow still wider. The purchasing power of the peasant masses will further decline. The revolutionary crisis will ripen.

"The crisis involves not only imperialism but also Indian capitalism, an integral part of the decayed colonial system. Forced by its own internal contradictions imperialism is conferring on India the doubtful boon of protectionism so lustily coveted by the Indian bourgeoisie. The rise of prices

that inevitably follows high tariffs will cause heavy contraction of the Indian market. The masses are so poor that if the prices of the commodities rise just a little they are obliged to go without even the most rudimentary necessities of life. Contraction of internal market will more upset the protection that high revenue duties will give Indian Industries.

Thus all attempts to ward off the crisis created by the very contradiction in the colonial economy have turned out to be unsuccessful. It has been maturing into a revolutionary situation in which abolition of imperialist domination over India together with all the forces of native reaction becomes a condition even for the normal industrial development of India.

The poor intellectuals, together with workers, peasants, artisans, small traders etc. constituting nearly 90 percent of the population of India have been in a state of hopeless economic bankruptcy. They must choose between decay, degradation and death from starvation on the one hand and revolt against the established order of society on the other. They have indeed chosen the latter course.

In a situation pregnant with maturing revolutionary crisis there is no other alternative for imperialism but to effect a compromise with the Indian bourgeoisie. Of course it must do so with the purpose of establishing its shaken position. In the period of its decay and decline imperialism cannot forego with

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the smallest part of its colonial reserve. Its desire has been to intensify the exploitation of the colonial masses as a means of proping up its tottering structure. But in order to enlist the support and services of the Indian bourgeoisie it has been compelled to grant some political rights and economic concessions. On the other hand the Indian bourgeoisie themselves having been alarmed by the rising tide of revolution have been eager to accept the extended hand of co-operation.

The Round Table Conference was a way to such an alliance between predatory imperialism and the native reactionaries. The Indian bourgeoisie showed its readiness to co-operate with it. The masses of the people through the Indian National Congress expressed their opposition to this new device of imperialist exploitation.

The Lahore Congress under pressure of the mass discontent indeed had declared its immediate objective as complete national independence. By the very implication of its declaration, the Congress was committed to the policy of non-co-operation with the Round Table Conference on the one hand and mobilisation of the masses of the people for the enforcement of the demand for national independence on the other.

At this fateful moment Roy urged upon the rank and file of the national Congress to bring the movement out of the vicious circle of negation; to

develop the agitation against the Round Table Conference into an organised mass movement by confronting British imperialism with the positive slogan of the Constituent Assembly as the only sovereign authority and democratic will of the Indian people competent to lay down the organic law of the future free national state of India.

This was indeed the way to the assertion of our cherished right to self-determination and to national freedom. But in order to come out triumphant in our struggle against imperialism the masses must be mobilised. This could be done only on the basis of their immediate economic and partial demands.

However the movement began with a campaign to defy the unjust salt laws under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The demand for the abolition of the salt laws indeed must command the active support of the great majority of our people. It was a step in the right direction, had it been backed up by a comprehensive revolutionary plan of action. It could have been developed into a militant struggle defying the mighty British imperialism, had there been a revolutionary leadership.

Being fully aware of the revolutionary potentiality of the movement imperialism adopted the policy of suppressing it before it could assume gigantic proportion and go out of the control of the then leadership believing in the "ethical" principle

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of non-violence. There were mass arrests throughout the country. Thousands of the rank and file Congressmen and Congress leaders were sent to imperialist prison. The country began to be ruled by ordinances and repression on the part of imperialism became the order of the day. This was happening at a time when in England there was a "Labour Government" in power.

Just at this moment it was announced in the European press that on the 12th May 1930 a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Labour International (otherwise known as the Second International) would be held in Berlin and the leaders of the British Labour party, the then members of the Labour Government, were to attend this meeting. On their arrival they were to be publicly received by the Social Democratic Party of Germany. This was an opportune moment to lodge a protest against the repressive policy of the British government in India.

Already Roy had got in touch with those young Indians on the Continent who desired to study various intricate problems affecting the course of the world politics and acquire such experience and knowledge as would be useful for the cause of the liberation of India from foreign domination.

On this occasion he urged upon these young Indians to seize that well afforded opportunity to register a strong protest against the policy of the British

Government claiming to represent the British working class and suppressing the struggle of the Indian people for national freedom.

As a result it was decided to organise a protest demonstration and address "An Open Letter" to the Executive Committee of the International. It is summarized as follows :—

" By the resolution adopted at its Stuttgart Session held in 1928 the Socialist Labour International had pledged itself to support the struggle of the oppressed colonial peoples and especially that of the Indian people for national liberation. One of your important members that is the British Labour Party has been in power in Great Britain and at its behest the anti-imperialist struggle in India was being crushed; the Congress organisations were being banned; the people were being deprived of their most elementary democratic rights—such as freedom of speech, press and association; and India was ruled by ordinances; thousands of men and women along with Mahatma Gandhi were arrested and sent to jail.

" The people of India were terrorised simply because they had declared themselves in opposition to the Round Table Conference a device for consolidating imperialist rule over India; and because they were opposed to the self-styled prerogative of the British Parliament to dictate to the people of India their political destiny.

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" The People of India would never accept any constitution framed by imperialist Round Table Conference or any such Commissions. The only constitution acceptable to them would be the one framed by a Constituent Assembly to be elected by universal suffrage.

" If you were true to your profession of socialism, then bring pressure to bear upon the British Labour Party to order immediate withdrawal of ordinances; release of all political prisoners (including those convicted for violence) and repeal of all the repressive laws and restore to the Indian people their right to freedom of speech, press and association. "

Thousands of copies of this " Open Letter (Translated in German) bearing the signatures of almost all the Indians in Berlin (with the exception of a few) and notably that of M. N. Roy were broadcast among some 80,000 workers assembled to greet " their leaders. "

This document created a favourable impression on the followers of the German Social Democratic Party. Of course the leaders were incorrigible. Therefore they became enraged. The volunteers of their Party (known as Reich-banner Kammando) were called upon to deal with Indian demonstrators. While they were parading the streets with placards bearing the inscriptions such as " Long Live Free India", " Long Live The Revolution", " Down With

British Imperialism", "Down With Repression In India.", "Long Live The Constituent Assembly", etc. etc. the "socialist" volunteers severely assaulted them, and tore off the placards. Had it not been for the intervention of the workers and some communists, those who were subjected to assaults would have been fatally injured. Later on the police* appeared on the scene in the name of "Law and Order" and arrested the assaulted men and marched them off to the police Lock-up.

In spite of the indifference on the part of the leaders of the Social Democratic (socialist) party, the followers that is the German workers indeed were sympathetic to the cause of Indian freedom. They patiently heard an Indian speaker in spite of their leaders' instructions to the contrary.

A section of Indians (in Berlin) headed by one Nambiar chose to denounce the organisers of the protest demonstrations and the signatories to the "Open Letter" as agents of bourgeois National Congress. For it had styled itself as ultra-communists ! To join a demonstration which was not (according to it) ultra-revolutionary, was indeed below their revolutionary dignity. Another section of Indians also had refrained from joining it. They did so under pressure from the German Foreign Office

* The President of the police in Berlin was a prominent member of the Executive Committee of the German Social Democratic Party.

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which naturally did not approve any such activities on the part of Indians in Germany.

In spite of apparent difference in the political outlook of these two sections of Indians, they had united with each other in preventing the Hindusthan Association of Central Europe from participating in the protest demonstration. Until then the association was a representative platform for agitation and propaganda on behalf of Indian people. By its decision not to participate in a demonstration organised in support of the movement in India, the association automatically ceased to represent the interests of the Indian people.* It remained since then a body of merry-makers.

This episode indeed necessitated the formation of a new organisation. A platform for propaganda and agitation was needed. A branch of the Congress^x under the then circumstances could serve such a purpose. Therefore those Indians who were eager to help the cause of their country's liberation from foreign imperialist bondage put themselves in communication with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. M. N. Roy

* The then Secretary of the Hindusthan association in Central Europe had resigned publicly declaring that he had nothing to do with any organisation of Indians eschewing the cause of Indian people for freedom.

^xThere were in those days similar branches of the Congress in England and America.

who was consulted on the matter gave his support to the organisers without any hesitation. Thereupon a Committee for the organisation of the German Branch of the Congress was elected by a meeting of Indians and Indian students held in Berlin.

Later on at the suggestion of M. N. Roy a conference of the representatives of a number of German Trade Unions and working class organisations along with the representatives of the organising Committee for the German branch of the Congress was organised. It was held in Berlin. As a result of the deliberations of the conference a committee fully representative of the working class movement was set up with a view to carry on agitation and propaganda in favour of the movement in India and to counter-act anti-Indian propaganda. §

Consequently a propaganda campaign was set up in favour of the movement in India. Mass meetings and demonstrations were organised throughout the Continent in support of the demand of the

§ Many imperialist agents were busy carrying on anti-Indian propaganda. One of them was Frau (Mrs) L. Kreuzberg a German. She having visited India some time in 1929 took some films depicting India and Indians as burden to the civilised world and justifying the British rule over India. She was greatly helped by some Indian States such as Mysore. In Germany she was lecturing and broadcasting the films taken by her.

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Indian people for national freedom and protesting against the policy of the British Government to suppress the Indian movement. This was followed by a similar agitation in the United States of America.

Just when Roy was busy organising a campaign in support of the struggle for national liberation in India, sensational reports of "a proletarian uprising" and "establishment of the Soviet government" in Sholapur were transmitted from India to the European Continent. These were printed prominently in the official organ of the Communist Parties of the leading European countries. Roy knew too well the then conditions in India to be enchanted by them. He was not misled by these stories.

Nothing of this sort had happened in Sholapur. There took place indeed a revolutionary outbreak* in this city. Really speaking the city congress Committee was in the control of the situation. For a day the Congress volunteers were in the possession of Sholapur City.

Standing away from the actual scene of the struggle taking place under the congress banner, some of these Indian radicals claiming to be infalli-

* Mallapur, Shetty and Kurban Hussein who were sentenced to death in connection with the revolutionary outbreak at Sholapur were not Communists but Congressmen.

ble orthodox communists were advocating the slogan of the "soviet" as against the Round Table Conference. They were dreaming of the immediate establishment of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." The revolutionary outbreak in Sholapur and peasant revolt in the rural area were wrongly described by them as events opening immediately an era of the proletarian revolution in India.

Had they had any consideration for the realities of the situation, they could have realised that these slogans did not correspond with the democratic nature of the Indian Revolution. It is erroneous to believe that "Soviet" had become a familiar thing in the colonial countries. A few youthful enthusiasts confounded their knowledge with that of the masses of the people. The proletariat remained in a state of backward class consciousness. Mere readiness to strike was no indication of their class consciousness.

Instinctive revolt on the part of the workers violently thrown out of the old mode of production and harnessed into a new one has been a feature of the early stage of capitalism in every country. Nevertheless nowhere this led to the revolutionary capture of power by the proletariat. But under favourable conditions the instinctive rebellion of the workers can be developed into a revolutionary consciousness; but one is not automatically with the other. It is quite likely in India the process is that of direct development. But it is sheer political ignorance to read class

consciousness in every worker ready to throw stones. This was a dangerous illusion. It was indeed due to adventurous tendency on the part of the proletarian vanguard.

In view of these considerations Roy addressed the following manifesto to the members of the revolutionary working class movement in India :—

“The fight for National freedom, that is freedom for the overwhelming majority of the people from colonial slavery, is 'the task of the working class. In order to accomplish this task the working class must create its own organ of struggle.....

“The class that can fully subscribe to the maximum programme of communism at present constitutes a very small fraction of the Indian people,.....Therefore the attempts to organise a Communist Party only with maximum programme of Communism is bound to fail in India. In that way, there can possibly come into existence a small group carrying on Communist propaganda, but unable to influence the political struggle of the masses. In order to discharge its great mission.... the rise of the Communist Party..... is conditional upon the readjustment of Communist tactics to the actual problems of the situation. In addition to its maximum programme, the Communist Party in the given situation must adopt a minimum programme, the programme of National Revolution. In doing so it will not in the least deviate from the basic principles of Communism. On the contrary the struggle for the solution of immediate problem.....will bring those principles within the realm of practical politics. An

effective struggle against imperialist domination, the victory in that struggle and the resulting abolition of conditions hindering free economic development of the country—all these will represent necessary stages **actually towards Communism**. The Communist Party, the Vanguard of the proletariat, must know how to lead the largest masses actually in the struggle for Communism even when these are not consciously fighting for that goal.

“ A party for leading the masses in a great revolutionary struggle cannot be organised by methods usual in India—a few individuals declaring themselves as such, and appointing an imposing list of office-bearers. The formulation of its programme is the first condition for the organisation of the Communist Party. The main cause for the absence of the Communist Party in India, when conditions are favourable and it is urgently needed by the fighting masses, is that until now there has been much confusion about its programme. There cannot be any doubt about the maximum programme of the Communist Party. It has been clearly formulated internationally and is binding for the Communist Parties in all countries. The basic principles of Communist Programme are 1. Overthrow of capitalism; 2. Abolition of private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange; 3. Overthrow of the propertied classes from political power.....4. Establishment of the Dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of the Soviet State for overwhelming the resistance of the defeated exploiting classes; 5. Reconstruction of the society on

the basis of the common ownership of the means of production.

+ + +

" In India the immediate task of the working class is not the realisation of the maximum programme of Communism. Imperialism being the result of capitalism, the struggle of the oppressed people for national freedom is essentially included in the programme of the Communist Party. But the struggle for national freedom involves classes other than proletariat that will not accept the maximum programme of Communism. Besides, in India the forces of production are still far below that level of development in which the struggle for the realisation of the maximum programme of Communism becomes an immediate necessity. The attainment of that level by the forces of production is conditional upon other revolutionary transformations of social relations. To execute these, therefore becomes an integral part of the programme of the Communist Party of India.

" The workers getting class conscious and proletarianised intellectuals cannot be expected to join the Communist Party, if it is organised only with the maximum programme which appears to have little relation with the prevailing conditions of the country. They must be shown how the solution of the problems actually before them concerning the immediate demands of the toiling masses comes within the perview of the programme of the Communist Party, and that this does not propose only to be a propaganda body dreaming of remote abstraction but to deal effectively with the realities of the moment.

“The nature of the national independence having been defined concretely, the next task of the C. P. is to show the way to practical assertion of the right of self-determination. This is the cardinal problem of the moment.....The issue involved is the creation of Democratic Organ of the struggle for power. The proletariat will establish hegemony over the struggle for national freedom by taking the initiative in the creation of that organ. While rejecting the discredited road of formal parliamentary democracy, the C. P. however, should not immediately take up the struggle for the establishment of the Soviet Republic, as the organ of the Dictatorship of the proletariat. That would be running after a Utopia. The conditions in India are not yet mature for the Dictatorship of the proletariat. Under the given conditions the revolutionary State in India must be based upon all the oppressed and exploited classes whose interests are irreconcilably antagonistic to imperialism. Therefore the C. P. must agitate for the election of the Constituent Assembly,

“ Let there be no illusion. The way inevitably leads to a revolutionary struggle out of which alone can a revolutionary state arise. Meanwhile all the popular forces of freedom should be mobilised and organised for the decisive struggle. To begin with, not only the workers and peasants, but all the oppressed democratic elements should be organised for the defence of their respective immediate interests.....That is the only way to the conquest of national freedom. That is also the way to the emancipat-

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ion of the toiling masses through a higher form of revolutionary struggle for the realisation of the maximum programme of the Communist Party. The long and arduous road must be covered in stages. The guarantee for the ultimate triumph is the ability of the C. P. to become the effective leader of the struggle from the beginning. For playing this historic role the C. P. must be organised as a party of the masses.

“The propaganda and organisation is of great importance. The party cannot come down from the top. It must grow out of the masses. Only then it will be a living effective political factor, able to resist and strive the fiercest repression that it is bound to face. The task of the pioneer group is not simply to formulate a programme, and demand that everyone should accept that programme as the first condition for joining the Communist Party. If only hundred percent Communists are to be allowed to join the party, we will never have a Communist Party in India.

“The task of the pioneer group is to get in touch with all concerned with the interests of the toiling masses and sympathetic to Communism. Our programme should be propagated among them. Local conferences should be organised for discussing the programme. Finally delegates elected from those conferences will assemble in the National Inaugural Conference of the C. P.

“Thus formed as an independent organisation, the Communist Party however should conduct its activities inside other mass organisations. Being the party of

the proletariat its base of operation is the trade unions, mills, factories, mines and such places of work. But as the organ through which the proletariat will exercise HEGEMONY in the struggle for national freedom it must work inside the nationalist mass organisations—the National Congress, Youth Leagues, students' organisations, Volunteer Corps. The local Congress Committees particularly will provide a very fruitful field for the activities of the Communist Party. Then the Communists should take initiative in the formation not only of peasants' unions but also in organising other oppressed classes—the artisans, employees, students, petty intellectuals, small traders, and soldiers for the defence of their respective immediate interests. The Communists should agitate for the broadening of the SOCIAL BASIS OF THE LOCAL CONGRESS COMMITTEES.

“Working in this way the Communist Party will remain in organic contact with all the forces of national revolution, involved in actual struggle, and thus be in a position to perform its function as the dominating factor of the entire situation. There is no other way to free the essentially revolutionary movement for national independence from the leadership of the bourgeoisie. There is no other way to Communism in India. In India, the way to Communism lies through the National Revolution.”*

Although Roy was very much occupied with the

* These are excerpts from the Manifesto.—July 1930

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affairs concerning the movement in India and those of the working class movements in the industrial countries of the world, he kept himself busy observing every single event of importance then taking place in the Far East. Undoubtedly he was concerned with what was happening on the soil of China.

In China the situation was going from bad to worse. Counter-revolution had devoured the Chinese Communist Party leaving only a few Communists to survive. Some of these Communists fanatically advocating the theory of an offensive (after they had been completely crushed) withdrew to the mountaneous regions in the centre of Southern China.

It was from this part of China that reports regarding the establishment of "Soviet Republic" and the victory of the "Red Army" began to be broadcast throughout the world since the end of 1928 to 1929. However the fact behind this apparently encouraging report was nothing but a revival of the peasant movement. The Communists placed themselves at the head of this movement and began to imagine the advent of the proletarian revolution.

Liberal use of wrong nomenclatures could not change the entire character of the movement. "Soviet State" and "Red Army" are appropriate organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These must be created by the proletariat themselves "in actual struggle for power and after the capture of power." How could a peasant uprising taking place as it did under conditions of pre-capitalist production with no connection with the industrial centres, create a "Soviet State" or a "Red

Army"? A democratic movement must be developed with the appropriate programme and slogans even if it is under the Communist leadership. The tendency to mouth romantic catch phrases indeed only could prevent the growth of the movement. It would raise suspicion among those who could be easily drawn in the orbit of the democratic revolution.

Counter-revolution could not totally crush the peasantry as it did in the case of the workers in the cities. It was a physical impossibility to suppress the poverty-stricken desperate masses distributed over vast areas. To despatch quickly the armed forces to long distances without any modern means of transportation was a problem by itself. It was a difficult task. Besides troops sent against the rebellious peasant masses would go over to them.

The national revolutionary movement during the years 1925-27 had created tremendous awakening among them. They were made politically conscious. Therefore it was easy to move them in mass struggle for the enforcement of their immediate economic demands.

Since the end of 1929-1930 the peasant movement began to assume gigantic proportion. Never-the-less it was suppressed. For, the working class the most important factor in the democratic revolution lay beaten by the counter-revolution. As yet it was unable to recover. On the other hand the city petty bourgeois masses remained in a state of demoralising confusion just because of the lack of revolutionary leadership.

In spite of Communist leadership, the peasants could

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never make a revolution by themselves, unless and until it functions as the vanguard of the proletariat not only in theory but in actual practice. The proletarian vanguard must stand on the fore-front of the struggle.

The Communist leadership of the mass agrarian upheavals during 1929-30 only functioned as the proletarian vanguard in theory. For, the proletariat completely crushed by the counter-revolution yet remained out of the field of action.

The vanguard of the proletariat is the Communist Party. The Chinese Communist Party only existed in name. According to the reports of its Central Committee, it was clear that the great majority of its membership was drawn from the peasant masses. Only a fraction of the entire reported membership came from the ranks of the proletariat. Thus the C. P. of China had been transformed into a peasant party. Notwithstanding this fact it continued "leading" the "Proletarian revolution" !

Such a party could never make a revolution except under the leadership of the Communists occupying the front ranks in the struggle. Nevertheless under the given relation of forces in the struggle a peasant party could not come into being. The most conscious (politically) of the peasant masses would join the C. P. individually. But its ranks must not be swelled by peasantry as a class, otherwise it would lose its proletarian character and become a party of the peasantry. As a matter of fact the majority of its membership must be drawn from the workers themselves. The Chinese Party had no more remained a revolutionary party of the proletariat.

When this happened it was clear beyond doubt that the proletariat was not in a position to play its historic role. In order to do this it must once again occupy its position in the front rank of the struggle. This could not be done without recovering from the severe defeat encountered in the end of 1927.

The relation of forces in the Chinese movement for national liberation remained unchanged. China was and is still in the stage of democratic revolution. Immediate solution of [the agrarian problem has been the chief task of this revolution.

The "Nationalist" Government* established at Nanking could not solve the agrarian problem. For, it was established not as a result of the victorious national democratic revolution but as a result of the bloodiest counter-revolution brought about with the help and connivance of the imperialist powers of the world through the instrumentality of the Chinese feudal militarists and reactionaries. Its declaration to modernise China was only a pretension. For, it could not accomplish this cherished aspiration of the Chinese people without wiping out the decadent and antiquated relation of

* Besides there were provincial Governments sometimes controlled by a single Governor or a military leader and sometimes under a "Governing Council of Politicians". The Nanking Government only had the allegiance of only a few of these and that too in a very vague sense. The problem of unification of China indeed had remained unsolved.

property in land and primitive mode of agricultural production. As a matter of fact the principles on which the Nanking Government was organised stood for the maintenance of these remnants of the antique age.

Any one that would claim to industrialise China must in the first place accomplish the agrarian revolution without which no progress in the direction of the progress and prosperity of the great majority of the Chinese people would be possible. It is a historic necessity. The working class, the vanguard of the army of the Chinese national democratic revolution, once again must come to its own and place itself in the position originally and historically occupied by it during the revolutionary crisis of 1925-27.

These were the unchallengeable facts and crass realities of the situation in China. Much has to be done before she would march on the road to the cherished final goal of the Great Social Revolution. As a matter of fact the accomplishment of the task of the national democratic revolution would at once open up a way in that direction.

No amount of misleading reports and exaggeration on the tempo of the revolutionary movement in China could deceive those few realists, acquainted with the prevailing conditions in China and able to speak on the question with authority.

Roy was one of these few realists. He was fully acquainted with the origin and structure of the Chinese society; economic and political conditions existing in that coun-

try. For, he was twice in China and had the opportunity to make an exhaustive study on the intricate problems of China. Moreover he had acquired all the necessary experience by actual participation in the Chinese movement and himself leading it. Therefore he could speak with authority on the solution of the problems of China.

Anxious to free the vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party, from the whirlpool of ultra-leftism and eager to help the rapid development of the movement in China, Roy wrote a good deal on this question in the revolutionary working class press.

Good many writers on China chose to glorify the romanticism of the "Chinese ultra-left Communists and presented an enchanting picture about events in that country. None of them tried to penetrate into the fundamental causes that led to the counter-revolution and presented concrete proposals for the development of China from a backward colonial country to a progressive and prosperous China. None of them could solve the intricate puzzle about the nature and form of the state that China must create as a result of a successful revolution. Two extremes were suggested by them—the bourgeois parliamentary state on the one hand and the "Soviet" state on the other. For years good many revolutionary Marxists (Communist thinkers) had struggled to find a solution of this question. None succeeded in that direction.

M. N. Roy had the good fortune of solving this baffling problem. In doing this, he did not follow the

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usual course generally adopted by the majority of the writers on China. He discarded all the romantic reports from that country and approached the whole question from the standpoint of Marxian realism.

By the end of the second half of 1930, he finished his voluminous book "Revolution And Counter-Revolution In China"* and presented to the world of revolutionary thinkers and the rank and file of the movement in China, an unchallengable solution of the Chinese puzzle. With remarkable foresight into the political future of the colonial countries and especially that of China and with enviable precision, he placed before the world the form and nature of the State that would be thrown up as a result of the success of the national democratic revolution in China. His forecast in this respect is that in a colonial country like China there would neither be any possibility of the establishment of a

* It was published in German by a well-known publishing house in Berlin. The book had a record sale on the European Continent. It was reviewed by the entire International press. Its review also appeared in the Indian press (notably in the Weekly Herald edited by Mr. B. G. Horniman). Herr Heniz Muller—a well-known German Journalist and writer while reviewing this book of Roy, said that it was the most remarkable and brilliant contribution to the political literature of the modern age. Indeed Roy had shown therein the road to the liberation of China. (Herr Muller was in China as a correspondent of a number of newspapers on the continent.)

bourgeois democratic state nor the state of proletarian dictatorship. He held that the Chinese revolution would throw up a revolutionary State which would be an organ of democratic dictatorship of the oppressed and exploited masses of the Chinese people.

Moreover he urged upon the Chinese Communists 'to discard the adventurous theory of the offensive; to recognise that China was still in the stage of national democratic revolution; and to formulate such tactics as to mobilise the democratic masses under the proletarian hegemony. Giving up the romantic pastime of setting up "Soviet republics" in the inaccessible mountaneous regions, the C. P. must focus its attention upon "the political and industrial nerve centres of the country. It must mobilise the proletariat again in action. The peasants would be always there as the vast reserve of revolutionary energy. None but the proletariat would ever be able to draw upon that reserve for, no other class is in a position to solve the agrarian problem of China."*

It is indeed regrettable that the English edition of this valuable and learned work of Roy yet remains to be published. An early publication would be of immense help to all the "genuine" fighters in the ranks of the Indian national liberation movement. They are bound to benefit by the rich experience of Roy in China. For, the problems of China are analogous to those of India.

* "Revolution and Counter Revolution in China-"
M. N. Roy.

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Just after the publication of this book, Roy was invited to the U. S. A. by the representatives of the American Communist Party (Majority Group). In the early days of his exile Roy was in America and for years he was organically connected with the workers' movement in that country. He was therefore acquainted with its various aspects. The American workers required his services for the cause of their emancipation from capitalist exploitation. But the cause elsewhere was calling him. That was from India—the land of his birth. Whatever was possible he did from abroad for the advancement of the cause of Indian freedom. The exigencies of the then situation in India demanded of him to return home in spite of risk. The urge was too great to be suppressed. He felt that he must be on the spot to prove the correctness of his views. Therefore he did not go to America and set himself to making plans to secretly enter India towards the close of the year 1930.

End of Volume I

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